

Full Town Council

To: All Town Councillors

Copies: **County Councillors** – Ferguson, Prentice, Seef & S Taylor
District Councillors – Ferguson, Davenport-Ray, Jennings, Pickering, I Taylor & S Taylor
Town Councillors – not a member of this committee
Local Press, Town Council Website & Noticeboard

Agenda for the meeting of the **Town Council** to be held on **Tuesday 29th October 2024** at **7.15pm** in the Eatons Centre, The Maltings, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

Please be aware that meetings may be recorded and made available to the public. Your participation in the meeting indicates your consent to being included in these recordings.

Public Participation

There will be a 10-minute session before the meeting to allow any resident to address the committee on any matter appearing on the agenda for this meeting.

Members of the Full Town Council are hereby summoned to attend this meeting to consider the following business.

C Robson
Town Clerk

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive and note councillor's apologies.

2 Declarations of Interest

To receive from councillor's declarations as to disclosable pecuniary interests and/or non-statutory disclosable interests along with the nature of those interests in relation to any agenda item of this meeting.

3 Minutes

Members to approve the following minutes as a true and accurate record:
Annual Council Meeting held on 24th September 2024.

Attachment 1

4 County and District Councillor Reports

To receive verbal updates or reports from County and District Councillors on matters of significance to St Neots.

5 Committee Minutes

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

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|--|--------------|
| i) Grants Sub-Committee held on 24 th September 2024 | Attachment 2 |
| ii) Planning Committee held on 1 st October 2024 | Attachment 3 |
| iii) Planning Committee held on 15 th October 2024 | Attachment 4 |
| iv) Operations and Amenities Committee held on 15 th October 2024 | Attachment 5 |
| v) Finance & Governance Committee held on 22 nd October 2024 | Attachment 6 |

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council approves the draft procedure outlining the consideration of grant funding for annual events which exceed £2,000 and are not eligible for funding under the Council's Grant Aid policy.

Attachment 7

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council approve the draft criteria that must be met for the awarding of funding for an event.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that to facilitate the Operations Team's efficient and flexible delivery of services the Council purchase an Avant-AV 760I and suitable attachments at a cost of £60,627 from the Council's General Reserve.

Attachment 8

6 Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan

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|--|--------------|
| i) To receive and consider a report on work undertaken by the Local Plan Consultation Working Group. | |
| ii) To receive and agree recommendations from the 'Local Plan Consultation Working Group' on Council responses to the Land Availability Assessments consultation, which responds to specific sites submitted as part of the Local Plan's 'Call for Sites'. | Attachment 9 |

7 Projects Status Summary

To receive and note a project status report.

Attachment 10

8 External Audit Report

To receive and note the 2023-2024 financial year's external audit report. To note that there are no recommendations or actions arising from the external audit.

Attachment 11

9 Reports from Outside Bodies

To receive verbal reports from Members who act as Council representatives on outside bodies.

10 Mayoral Engagements

To receive and note a list of upcoming Mayoral engagements to be attended by the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor.

- Sunday 10 — Remembrance Sunday, Procession and Service
- Monday 11— Veterans Day Ceremony
- Saturday 16 — Assassination! A play by The St Neots Players
- Sunday 17 — St Neots Half Marathon
- Wednesday 20 — Mayor's Charity Bingo
- Saturday 23 — St Neots Choral Society concert
- Sunday 24 — Christmas switch on
- Saturday 29 — Mayor's Charity Dinner Night (Huntingdon)

11 Date of Next Meeting

To note the date of the next Council meeting will be 26th November 2024.

12 Committee In Private Session

RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment or contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

13 Purchase of Asset

To receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk on the progress of the purchase of an asset through the Government's Community Ownership Fund.

Full Town Council

Present: Cllrs Slade (Chair), Banks, Bolanz, Chapman, Collins, Cooper-Marsh, Goodman, Hitchin, Johnson, Kumar, Macnab-Grieve, Pitt, Simonis, J Smith, and S Smith

Absent: Cllrs Crompton, Dundas-Todorov, Dunford, Mascarenhas, Maslen and Terry

In attendance: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Project Delivery Manager

Minutes of the meeting of St Neots Town Council held on **Tuesday 24th September 2024** at **7.15pm** in the Eatons Centre, 18 The Maltings, Eaton Socon, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

Public Participation

There were four members of the public present.

A Member of the public addressed the Council in relation to agenda item 10 – the Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan.

The resident addressed the Council in their role as Chairman of the Pightle as well as a local resident. In addressing the Council the resident drew the Council's attention to the importance of protecting and enhancing green space land in St Neots, with particular reference to the land known locally as 'The Cow Field'. The land, which is almost part of the flood plain is widely used and it was asked that the Council support having it taken off the list of sites for development consideration.

ACTIONS

090 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Crompton, Dundas-Todorov, Dunford, Mascarenhas, Maslen and Terry

Admin

091 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

092 Council Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of 23rd July 2024 as a true and accurate record.

093 County and District Councillor Reports

HDC Cllr Andrew Jennings addressed the Council, reporting as follows;

- HDC are consulting on three key documents as part of the Local Plan development and consultation. A drop in event is to be held in Loves Farmhouse for interested members of the public. Councillors are asked to encourage residents to engage and respond with the process.

- A community health and wealth building strategy fund has been launched. The fund of £750,000 has become available from interest receipts. The purpose of the fund is to support physical and mental health.
- The Licensing committee granted a new licence for rugby club.
- The Development Management Committee met recently and reviewed one application relating to St Neots. This was the Priory Centre refurbishment application which was approved.
- Local grants have been awarded to St Neots Initiative, Loves Farm Community Centre, and St Neots Tennis Club.
- The Community Chest Fund is still open, and Councillors were asked to encourage constituents to apply.
- The Town and Parish Forum is taking place on 23rd October 2024 in Burgess Hall, Members were encouraged to attend.

The Chairperson brought agenda item 10 up the agenda due to the presence of public who had spoken on the matter.

094 Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan

The Chairperson introduced correspondence from Huntingdonshire District Council on Local Plan consultation process which was due to run until 27th November 2024.

The Chair explained that there were three key documents which were being consulted on;

- Further Issues and Options
- Land Availability Assessments
- Sustainability Appraisals

Cllr Pitt stated he would not sit on a Working Group, should one be set up or take part in the Council's discussions due to his position as a cabinet member at HDC. He commented that this is the time decisions happen on whether developments should come forward. A lot of sites that have been put forward and it is important for the Council to engage in the process.

It was proposed and seconded that the Council set up a working group to consider the Local Plan documentation and bring back proposed responses to the consultation.

A Member expressed support for the resident's request that the Council respond stating that the 'Cow Field' be removed from possible sites for consideration. It was commented that when the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was prepared

there were reasons why the designated open green space stopped before this area. The Council should consider applying to the District Council to extend green space along riverside. Any building on it would impact flooding in different areas of the town.

RESOLVED that the Council establish a Working Group to consider the Local Plan documentation and recommend consultation responses to the Full Council.

Membership: Cllrs S. Smith, Chapman, Bolanz and Hitchin

Committee Minutes

- 095 i) Members received and noted minutes of the Extraordinary Planning Committee Meeting held on 20th August 2024.
- 096 ii) Members received and noted minutes of the Planning Committee held on 3rd September 2024.
- 097 iii) Members received and noted minutes of the Promotion and Events Committee held on 3rd September 2024.
- 098 iv) Members received and noted minutes of the Environment and Emergency Committee held on 10th September 2024.
- 099 v) Members Operations and Amenities Committee held on 10th September 2024.
- 100 vi) Members received and noted minutes of the Planning Committee agenda held on 17th September 2024.

The Chairperson explained that the Committee had resolved to object to a planning application for the former Brook and Barter due to concerns over the density and size of proposed dwellings. The Chairperson commented that they would be happy to provide members with more information if they wished.

- 101 vii) Members received and noted minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee held on 17th September 2024.

Members considered and resolved the following recommendations from the Finance & Governance Committee;

- 102 **RESOLVED** to approve expenditure of £5,353.96 in earmarked election reserves towards the £13,353.96 cost of a St Neots Town Council by-election held on 2 May 2024. The remainder will be paid from the current year's election expenses budget.

- 103 **RESOLVED** the Council approve over expenditure of the Christmas Lights Capital budget (240 4508) of £1,503.10 to allow enabling works for an additional 10 streetlight Christmas decorations. That the overspend is offset against underspend in the Christmas Lights lease budget (240 4507).
- 104 **RESOLVED** that the Council release £9,990.00 in funding from the earmarked reserve for Community Buildings to complete the replacement of the rear felted flat roof (Job 4), including removal and disposal of 3nos redundant A/C plants and relocation of 8nos working A/C plants with replacement of the pipework.
- 105 **RESOLVED** that the Council approve expenditure of up to £2,000.00 from General Reserves to appoint a professional consultant (Structural Engineer) to renew the recommendations of previous Structural Survey and provide the design drawings for the wall rebuild/repair.
- 106 **RESOLVED** the Council approve the disposal of two parklets previously located on the Market Square that have reached the end of their economic life and that they be removed from the asset register.

107 **Members Motion**

Members received and considered a motion from Cllr R Slade that the Council commission a marketing agency to rebrand and promote the Priory Centre.

Members discussed the motion at length, with a member commenting that the basis of the motion was good, and it was important that the new facility be properly marketed and promoted. However, the process should look beyond creating a venue for hire and build in venue identity, which internal and interior design decisions would be impacted by, along with venue name, logo and branding.

A Member expressed support but stated that the process needs to be led by the Priory Centre General Manager, who is responsible for that vision and making the centre work. Another Member highlighted the General Managers ambition to make the venue an inclusive community space that offers something for everyone.

A Member stated the need to ensure the terms of the lease and more detailed figures on potential Town Council contributions were agreed before funding was invested.

A Member queried funding beyond the two-year period for ongoing marketing and that net revenue figures would be needed to define marketing investment. It was explained by the proposer of the motion that the two-year funding was intended to establish identity, branding, website and marketing and for this to 'bed in' for a period and establish itself. Future Council's would need to consider future revenue budgets. The proposal is to take us from where we are, through to establishing and promoting a new venue identity and marketing strategy that allows for continuation as business as usual from that point.

The motion was proposed and seconded as written.

A Member stated that in their view there was an order in which the process should be taken, and the council should avoid prejudging a decision around a lease, and while they were confident lease term would be agreed they spoke against engaging a marketing company until it was in place.

Members commented that a tendering process would take time. The Clerk confirmed that a tender would need to be properly advertised on the government contract finder website. It commented that the tender process and lease processes could be progressed simultaneously. Another Member commented that the risks were low and that the benefit of progressing with the venue identity, branding and marketing

It was proposed that the motion be amended that a tender process be completed but not contracted until a lease is agreed and estimated contribution understood.

The proposer did not accept the amendment.

The amendment was seconded.

The Chairperson called for a vote on the amendment. The amendment failed.

The Chairperson called for a vote on the proposed motion.

RESOLVED that St Neots Town Council budget £70,000 from General Reserves to run a tendering process commissioning a marketing agency to undertake a two-year initiative to rebrand and promote the refurbished Priory Centre.

108 Projects Status Summary

The Council's Project Delivery Manager (PDM) introduced and took the Council through a report summarising the status of key projects.

Members thanked the PDM for the report and stated it was good to see the information and projects laid out in this way.

The report is attached to these minutes for reference.

109 Youth Work Summary

Members received and noted a report from the Council's Engagement and Participation Youth Worker outlining projects and activities that had been undertaken over the last year. The report set out the numbers of children engaged, areas covered, funding secured and ongoing sessions.

Members expressed their thanks for both the report and all the work that had been undertaken by the Youth Worker, it was all very positive and a lot had been achieved in one year.

110 Annual Report

Members deferred consideration of a draft Annual Report following an update from the Town Clerk that it was not yet at a stage to include on the agenda. The Clerk would circulate the report in-between this meeting and the next Full Council meeting.

111 Huntingdonshire District Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Cllr Pitt declared an interest as a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet.

Members received and noted communication from Huntingdonshire District Council on the new process for Community Infrastructure Levy funding applications.

It was noted that the Town and Parish Council forum in October would include a session on the CIL application process and members were encouraged to attend. The Council has been given advance notice for the next application window and should start working towards any applications it might wish to make.

112 Correspondence

Members received and noted the following correspondence;

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Bus Franchising Consultation
- Cople Neighbourhood Development Plan

Members did not feel a formal response was needed.

113 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were none.

114 Date of Next Meeting

Members received and noted that the date of the next Full Council meeting would be 29th October 2024 at 7:15pm.

115 Private Session

RESOLVED In terms of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment or contractual matters and it is, therefore, **RESOLVED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

116 Community Ownership Fund Heritage Asset Purchase

The Town Clerk provided Members with an update on progress in purchasing an asset for which the Council is receiving funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities

and Local Government. This funding was from the Community Ownership Fund. The Town Clerk explained that as part of receiving the grant funding the MHCLG was seeking a resolution from the Council that it had in place the required level of match funding needed.

RESOLVED that the council holds the required level of match funding of the Community Ownership Fund Project costs of £87,500 of the Community Ownership Fund project costs.

DRAFT

Grants Sub-Committee

Present: Committee Members

Cllrs Cooper-Marsh (Chairperson) Banks, Chapman, Collins, Goodman, Hitchin, Kumar, Pitt and Slade

In Attendance: Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer

Absent: Cllr Maslen

Minutes of the meeting of the **Grants sub-committee** held on **Tuesday 24th September 2024** at **6.30pm** in the Eaton's Centre, The Maltings, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

Public Participation

There were 2 members of the public present. One member of the public addressed the committee on a grant application being considered by the committee.

ACTIONS

017 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Maslen.

Admin

018 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

019 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve of the minutes of the sub-committee held on 18th June 2024 as a true and accurate record.

Admin

020 Grant Budget Summary

Members noted the summary of grants awarded and the level of grant funding available for the current financial year.

Admin

021 Grant Aid Applications

Members considered applications from organisations for awarding of funds under the small grant aid scheme. Representatives of organisations making applications were invited to address the Committee.

Admin

The committee considered each application and resolved to award grant funding as follows;

022 RESOLVED to award grant funding of £1,400 to Cambridgeshire Carer Support Service for the Making Spaces Project which will subsidise breaks and activities for unpaid carers in St Neots.

023 RESOLVED to defer a decision on an application from Relate Cambridge and to invite the applicant to attend the next Finance and Governance Committee meeting when the application would be reconsidered. That the RFO feedback to the applicant that Members would like clarity on the following points:

- To what extent is the project they are seeking funding for a core part of the operation and therefore running costs? The Council needs to ensure the funding provided is going to create extra value.
- Statistics provided show that 163 appointments were delivered in St Neots, but the statistics do not breakdown how many of these were subsidised appointments.
- The last funding provided by the Town Council was in 2020 to subsidise sessions for which the grant relates. What has been the process for subsidising sessions in the three years following that grant award? Specifically, did the funding provided cover three years' worth of sessions.

024 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the date of the next Grants Sub-Committee meeting was to be held on 10th December 2024 subject to a review of the grant aid scheme by the Finance & Governance Committee.

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COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON



St Neots
Town Council

St Neots Town Council, Steve Van De Kerkhove Community Centre, Cemetery Rd, St Neots, PE19 2BX

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Town Clerk – Chris Robson **Town Mayor** – Cllr Richard Slade

Planning Committee

Present: **Committee Members**
Cllrs Slade (Chairperson), Collins, Hitchin, Maslen, and Pitt

Absent:

In Attendance: Deputy Town Clerk, Senior Administrator

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning committee** held on **Tuesday 1st October 2024** at **6.15pm** in the Eatons Community Centre, 18 The Maltings, Eaton Socon, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

- | 057 Apologies for Absence | ACTIONS |
|---|----------------|
| Apologies were received from Cllrs Terry, Dunford and Cooper-Marsh | |
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| 058 Declarations of Interest | |
| None declared. | |
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| 059 Minutes | |
| RESOLVED to approve of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 17 th September 2024 as a true and accurate record. | Admin |
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| 060 Public Participation | |
| There were no members of the public present. | |
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| 061 Schedule of Current Planning Applications | |
| The Committee considered the schedule of current planning applications, and the recommendations made by the committee are appended to these minutes. | Admin |
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| 062 Street Naming and Numbering | |
| Committee members noted the allocation of addressing: | |
| i) 23 High Street, St Neots | |
| ii) 58-62 High Street, St Neots | |
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| 063 Pavement License Applications | |
| Committee members noted the application for a Temporary Pavement Licence from Luan Saraqi, 2 Church Walk, St Neots and no concerns were raised. | |
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| 064 Development Management Committee | |
| The Chairman informed Members that there had not been a meeting of the District Council's Development Management Committee since the last meeting of the Town Council planning committee. | |

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

No.	Reference	Development	SNTC Decision	Notes
The following application/s are for listed building consent				
S1	24/01662/LBC	Mr Avtar Pardesi 28 Cambridge Street St Neots PE19 1JL Demolition of Existing Garage structure and wall, including alteration to existing wall and formation of new gated entrance	Support	Minimum impact on neighbours
S2	24/01716/HHFUL	Andrew Reading 16 Church Meadows St Neots PE19 1PR Erection of single storey side extension	Support	Satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development
The following application/s are in a conservation area				
S3	24/01635/S73	Mr David Bineth - Neots Properties Ltd Poundstretcher Tebbutts Road St Neots Variation of condition 2 (plans listed in table above) of 23/00484/S73 to allow for amended drawings	Object Cllr Pitt abstained	Poor quality accommodation Loss of high street retail units as per St Neots Neighbourhood Plan and lack of robust marketing.
S4	24/01559/HHFUL	Mrs Adele Smith 81 Avenue Road St Neots PE19 1LH Demolition of part of single storey rear extension. Erection of single storey and two storey extension to the rear with associated landscaping and drainage.	Support Cllr Slade abstained	Subject to use of materials being acceptable to the conservation officer
S5	24/01637/HHFUL	Mr & Mrs Roper 173 Crosshall Road Eaton Ford St Neots Replacement boundary wall.	Support	Improves the property
S6	24/01470/FUL	Mr Pete Meara Land At 48 Beauchamp Close Eaton Socon Erection of one self build dwelling.	Support	Fits in with the local street scene
S7	24/01652/HHFUL	Mr & Mrs Dobbin 103 Potton Road Eynesbury St Neots Erection of ground floor rear extension and new pitched roof with dormer	Support	We consider that the proposal would assimilate itself to the existing part of the town Improves the property
S8	24/01604/S73	Mr Mark Garrood 15 - 16 Howard Road Eaton Socon St Neots Variation of condition 5 on 24/00723/FUL to change the velocity cone to an accelerator fan on the flue	Noted	No additional comments due to lack of technical knowledge on this type of equipment.

Chairperson



St Neots
Town Council

St Neots Town Council, Steve Van De Kerkhove Community Centre, Cemetery Rd, St Neots, PE19 2BX

T: 01480 388911 E: enquiries@stneots-tc.gov.uk W: www.stneots-tc.gov.uk

Town Clerk – Chris Robson **Town Mayor** – Cllr Richard Slade

Planning Committee

Present: **Committee Members**
Cllrs Slade (Chairperson), Dunford, Hitchin and Maslen

Absent: Cllr Cooper-Marsh

In Attendance: Town Clerk, Admin Assistant

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning committee** held on **Tuesday 15th October 2024** at **6.15pm** in the Eatons Community Centre, 18 The Maltings, Eaton Socon, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

065 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Collins, Pitt and Terry.

ACTIONS

066 Declarations of Interest

Richard Slade declared an interest in planning application no 6, 24/01709/HHFUL

067 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1st October 2024 as a true and accurate record.

Admin

068 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

069 Schedule of Current Planning Applications

The Committee considered the schedule of current planning applications, and the recommendations made by the committee are appended to these minutes.

Admin

070 Brockwell Storage and Solar Statutory Consultation on East Park Energy

Members received and noted the information provided.

071 Development Management Committee

The Chairman informed Members that there had not been a meeting of the District Council's Development Management Committee since the last meeting of the Town Council planning committee. There are no items relating to St Neots in the next scheduled meeting of the DMC.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Schedule of Planning Applications – 15th October 2024

No.	Reference	Development	SNTC Decision	Notes
The following application/s are for listed building consent				
The following application/s are in a conservation area				
S1	24/01587/TREE	Mr Charles Scarr 8 Cambridge Gardens St Neots PE19 1JX Box Elder - Lower branches of tree are hanging over public highway. Encroaching lower branches require cutting back by 2m	Support	Within a sustainable location. Will have no negative impact on the wider landscape character of the area.
S2	24/01541/FUL	GPS Estates Ltd Land Between Manor Grove and Cromwell Road Eynesbury Diversion of existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (2 & 23) through the site and creation of a bituminous cycle and pedestrian footpath with soft landscaping.	Support	Makes efficient use of its site. Within a suitable location.
S3	24/01748/S73	Mr Alistair Smith 15 Tennyson Place Eaton Ford St Neots Variation of Condition 2 (Plans) of 22/02557/HHFUL.	Support	Minimum impact on neighbours. Improves the property.
S4	24/01743/HHFUL	Mr & Mrs Cutmore 8 Flawn Way Eynesbury St Neots Single storey flat roof extension to replace existing conservatory	Support	Improves the property. Satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development. Makes efficient use of its site.
S5	24/01687/HHFUL	Mrs Young 89A Crosshall Road Eaton Ford St Neots Single storey rear extension	Support	Minimum impact on neighbours. Within a sustainable location.
S6	24/01709/HHFUL	Mr Ian Peacock 36 Manor Farm Road St Neots PE19 1PW Removal of car port, two storey extension, single storey extension and demolition of existing garage	Support RS - abstain	Makes efficient use of its site. Improves the property.

Chairperson

Operations & Amenities Committee

Present: Cllrs Goodman (Chairperson), Chapman, Dunford, Hitchin and Maslen

In attendance: Town Clerk, Operations Manager, Senior Maintenance Technician, Project Deliver Manager

Absent: Cllrs Bolanz, Collings, Cooper-Marsh and Johnson

Minutes of the meeting of the **Operations & Amenities committee** held on **Tuesday 15th October 2024** at **7.15pm** in the Eaton's Centre, The Maltings, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

Public Participation

There is one member of the public present who wished to address the Council in relation to the Museum Repair agenda item.

ACTIONS

049 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted from Cllrs Bolanz, Collins and Johnson

Admin

050 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Chapman declared an interest in agenda item 11 the draft 'Hire of Council Equipment' policy as a Member of the Eatons Community Association who use Council equipment to facilitate a May Day event.

051 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Operations and Amenities Committee held on 10th September 2024 as a true and accurate record.

052 Action list

Members received and noted the committee action list. The following items were raised in more detail;

Jubilee Trees – Trees purchased by the Town Council are to be delivered directly to HDC who will be planting the trees on the Council's behalf. The agreement with HDC includes the planting of wildflowers as well as trees. This will happen during the current planting season.

Changing Places – Awaiting approval of charity. Provided all evidence needed.

Note that a Councillor asked that the toilets be open that can be and leave the changing places closed.

053 Local Highways Improvement Bids 2024-25

- i) Location of signs – attach to existing post if possible as less street furniture. **RESOLVED** to go route without additional post.



- ii) Provided an update on Luke street – go through individual objections – could we see written objections and wording of them, along with the successful ones. Ask Simone to attend as well.
A Member expressed that they wouldn't support Montague Street being one way.

054 Community Orchard

Town Clerk introduced a report which had been put together by the Councils Environmental Project Officer. Members noted that there would be a surplus of trees from the Bio Diversity Grant the Council had received. It was recommended by the Environment and Emergency Committee that the Council use these trees to create a community fruit orchard at the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre.

A Member commented that there was a community orchard at Sudbury Meadow and expressed concern the proposed location could be encouraging people to go to that area, which is isolated and now the base for the Town Council office. It was felt there was a risk of attracting anti-social behaviour adjacent to and in the cemetery.

The Operations Manager commented that surplus trees would be good to use in a number of locations around the town as part of reducing annual bedding plants and the costs and maintenance associated with them. Members expressed support for this idea.

A Member commented that the land at Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre could have other purpose in the future and the ability to consider this would be lost with an orchard.

RESOLVED that the Operations Manager work with the Environmental Project Officer to identify locations around the town that would be suitable for, and benefit from trees as part of reducing annual bedding.

055 Operational Equipment

Members received and considered a report proposing that the Council invest in a new piece of equipment for the purpose of the operations team delivering its work/services. The Operations Manager and Senior Maintenance Technician addressed the Council to explain the benefits of the equipment, how it would help create efficiencies in the team and how the resource freed up could be allocated.

Members welcomed the report and the proposed equipment. A Member queried how the vehicle would be stored given the pressure on depot space. The Operations Manager explained that the equipment also worked as a forklift truck which would allow the team to better store and stack items, creating more floor space.

Members discussed the benefits of the equipment and the additional works it would allow the team to undertake. Members particularly welcomed the resource that



would be freed up to allow the team to undertake more traditional operational tasks which would improve the public realm under the Council's ownership.

Members asked several questions about the equipment's ability and scope of work it could undertake.

It was noted that the equipment would allow the operations team to widen its ability to;

- Cut banks and ditches it couldn't currently, but which fall under the CCC grass cutting contract.
- Cut more areas and verges.
- Help remove weeds.
- Reduce time to cut hedge rows and potentially cutting more hedgerows.
- Potential to undertake more work for County Council as part of reviewing the grass cutting contract.

The equipment will also dramatically improve efficiency, reducing the number of operatives and time involved in certain tasks, particularly hedge cutting. This freed up resource will allow the team to address operational jobs it does not presently have resource to undertake.

The Committee discussed leasing the equipment rather than purchasing. However, it was not felt that this would be a practical option given the use of the vehicle and the potential it has for wear and tear.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council purchase an Avant-AV 760I and suitable attachments at a cost of £60,627 and that the Finance and Governance Committee consider and make a recommendation on funding for the equipment.

056 Budget Setting 2025/26

Members received and considered current budgets which fall under the Operations and Amenities committee, along with budgets highlighted by officers which may need increasing or could be lowered based on current and previous actual spend. Members noted that officers had recommended a revenue budget for the maintenance of defibrillators. This is in response to the Council adopting community defibrillators during the past year. It was proposed and seconded that funding is also included to fund the purchase of additional defibrillators as part of ensuring the Council responds to community need.

It was proposed that if the purchase of new defibrillators can be regarded as small capital items that the revenue budget is increased to £3,000 to allow for the purchase of additional defibrillators.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND as part of the budget setting process that the proposed 'Defibrillator' budget is increased to £3,000 to allow for the purchase of a new



defibrillator for consideration by the Council as part of the overall budget setting process.

057 Strategic Projects

Members received and considered a schedule of key projects which fall under the remit of the Operations and Amenities Committee. Members noted that several projects were due to come to a conclusion, while others were still to be started. The schedule included timeframes and estimated costs based on current available information.

Members were in broad agreement with the projects highlighted in the table and the timeframes set against them. A Member commented that not all the projects were strategic and instead were day to day operations related to existing assets, play park improvements was highlighted as an example. The Clerk explained that it was important that all projects be included as the same resource would be used to deliver all the projects and Councillors needed to understand timescales, priorities and work allocation in that context.

Members discussed play provision in detail, noting that the schedule proposed bringing forward refurbishment of two poor quality play parks. The reason for this was that they were assets that needed improving and could be more quickly addressed the developing a completely new play park in Eaton Ford, which would require consultation and planning. Members discussed the creation of a new play park at Eaton Ford, which was a strategic project. It was explained that it was not intended to push this project back, but that there were a lot of enabling works such as identifying the best location, assessing play need and consultation.

It was agreed that the refurbishment of Swift and Bevington play parks were not strategic but would be left on the schedule due to the resource implications related to the projects. The Project Deliver Manager would highlight that they are not strategic projects. They would be progressed under business as usual for the committee.

Members discussed timescales for items such as cemetery land, depot options and a new play park and it was confirmed these matters would be worked on and brought forward to future meetings in line with the schedule.

The Chairperson would feed the Committees comments back to the Strategic Working Group.

058 Burial Regulations

Members received amended Burial Regulations for St Neots Cemeteries. Members noted that the committee had reviewed the documents over a period of months and that two Councillors had submitted amendments, which had been incorporated into an updated version.



A Member commented that in addition there was no mention of consecrated land within the documents and that the regulations should identify if the land available is consecrated or unconsecrated and any process related to this.

It was agreed officers would bring back amended versions of the regulations which included reference to the consecration of the land available.

059 Hire of Council Equipment Policy

Members reviewed the draft Hire of Council Equipment policy. It was explained that the policy had come forward as there was no clear guidance for officers on when the Council will lend equipment and the impact that has on the life of the equipment and resource of the Operations Team. The policy was coming forward as a result of a recommendation from the Promotion and Events Committee.

A Member commented that the policy did not cover equipment that may have been purchased by the Council for a specific purpose and that in such cases that equipment should not be hired out and should be used for the purpose for which the Council resolved to purchase it. Market Square bistro tables were provided as an example of such equipment.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the Finance and Governance Committee that the Council adopts the draft Hire of Council Equipment policy subject to include an amendment to state that equipment purchased by the Council for a specific purpose will not be hired out unless the Council resolves as such.

060 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the date of the next Operations and Amenities Committee would be on 12th November 2024 at 7.15pm.

061 Lease – Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Buildings

Members received and reviewed professional valuations for the two buildings which comprise the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre. Members commented that the recommended rent was fair and discussed the basis for agreeing a new contract with tenants for either building in the future, which should ensure the valuation is reflected. It is important that there is a public record that shows the Council is obtaining the correct value for its buildings, or if it is granting funds otherwise that this support is recorded and clear in our accounts system.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Finance & Governance Committee

Present: Cllrs Banks, Chapman, Collins, Cooper-Marsh (Chair), Goodman, Hitchin, Maslen, Pitt and Slade.

Absent: Cllr Kumar

In attendance: Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer, Operations Manager, Senior Maintenance Technician

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance & Governance committee** held on **Tuesday 22nd October** at **7.15pm** in the Eaton's Centre, The Maltings, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

Public Participation

There was one member of the public present.

ACTIONS

055 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Kumar.

Admin

056 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Pitt declared an interest in agenda item 8 as organiser of St Neots Festival which previously received grant funding from the Council.

Cllr Goodman declared an interest in agenda item 7 as a Member of Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre.

057 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the 17th September 2024 as a true and accurate record.

058 Payments

Members received and noted payments for July 2024 and August 2024.

Raised question on the costs of cost of migrating server. It was explained that the server is cloud based but a new one needed to be built which was compatible with HMRC's reporting system.

059 Grant Application

Members received and considered a grant application from Relate Cambridgeshire for funding towards low-cost counselling. The application had been deferred by the Grants Sub-Committee with a request for additional information, which had been provided by the applicant and shared with Members.

A representative of the Charity addressed the committee to explain the work of Relate and the need for a grant. Relate delivers Counselling sessions across Cambridgeshire and is seeking funding for a bursary to help lower the cost of sessions for St Neots residents referred to the service. A sessions costs £75 to the Chairty and a fee of £40 is sought from clients. However, this can still be out of the reach of many

and the bursary would be used to help lower the session cost. At present anywhere between 30-40% of sessions would be subsidised. 163 appoints have been delivered to St Neots residents during the reporting period.

An individual view is taken on each session and whether it is subsidised by £35.

It was proposed and seconded that £1,800 be granted from the general grants fund to create a bursary for St Neots residents to receive counselling.

A Member commented that they fully supported the work of the Charity, but the Council must be careful not to breach its grant aid policy. The Council should be satisfied that this funding is for a bursary which is delivered on a case-by-case basis and not operational costs.

RESOLVED to award a grant of £1,800 to Relate Cambridgeshire from the Small Grant Aid Scheme budget for the purpose of funding a bursary for St Neots residents to receive subsidised counselling through the charity.

060 Museum Funding

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk which set out a funding request from St Neots Museum in relation to the Council's annual grant funding which helped fund the ongoing operations of the museum.

A Member asked whether it would be possible to get an average on the relevant sector pay increases. Members are keen to link budget increases to realistic sector wage growth.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council increase the Museum Grant budget (230-4351) by £3,860 for the 2025/26 budget year and that this increase is factored into the overall budget to be considered at the next Finance and Governance Committee meeting.

061 Service Level Agreements

Members received and considered initial approaches from three organisations seeking funding which sits outside the Council's Grant Aid Scheme. In such cases, where the funding is not eligible for a grant award, the Council will consider whether it may be minded providing funding as part of its budget setting process through a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Members considered each organisation individually and agreed the Finance and Governance Committee would be minded to further consider recommending entering a Service Level Agreement with each organisation, subject to further information coming forward.

Members stressed that any potential SLA should be set up as an offer or 'package' the Council could fund, clearly demonstrating what the Council's money was going to provide and the outcomes from that.

i) Money Advice St Neots

Members commented that they would like to know a more specific breakdown of what the funding will be used for in terms of hours delivered and tied to a specific outcome that can be measured. Members would expect an SLA to identify how many sessions the Council's funding would facilitate and how many residents would be helped.

Members commented that to progress consideration of an SLA to the next state they would want to know;

- More detail on the level of debts that have been dealt with on average for individuals helped. Specifically, what is the average level of debt of the 211 people helped. Members felt this would help make sense of the impact the service has for residents.
- The number of sessions the Council's funding would fund and the impact of those.

ii) Rural Cambridgeshire Citizens Advice Bureau

Members noted there was potential the organisation may be in a position to take lease of a building in St Neots and if this happened it would mean the cost of providing the additional days face to face service would be reduced. At this stage it was unknown if this would progress.

A Member commented that proportionally it was hard to understand the value received for the £10,000 put in. However, another Member commented that they felt the 'offer' made was the clearest of the three being considered. The funding which would be provided by the Council would be a specific and clear thing which could be measured against delivery. The costs provided were clearly linked to the additional service and value the Town Council would be providing for the community.

Members commented that to progress consideration of an SLA to the next state they would want to know;

- How many days/weeks a year do the organisation operate the face-to-face day.
- The number of appointments delivered in a day.
- How many face to face appointments can't take place based on the current one day a week provision.

If an SLA is agreed it must be clear that the funding is to provide an additional second days face to face appointments on top of the current one day a week funded by HDC.

iii) Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre

A Member commented that as the Council provides free accommodation for the organisation the value of this financial support should be shown when considering any further funding. As part of the process the Council

should consider aligning the process for rent of the building with other leases it has in place with community groups.

A Member commented focusing on the car scheme in terms of the funding from the Council was a sensible approach as this was something tangible that could be measured, and for which benefit from any funding could be evidenced.

Members felt more information and financial breakdowns were needed as part of progressing an SLA to the next level. Members commented that to progress consideration of an SLA to the next state they would want to know;

A more defined breakdown of the marketing costs and what marketing is undertaken (marketing campaigns, where is the car sharing scheme advertised etc) There needs to be more specific information around what is being produced and costs.

A clear breakdown of income and expenditure for the Car Share scheme, showing the amount of income from amounts charged per journey and any other income set against the expenditure for the scheme. This is to demonstrate where the funding gap is that needs addressing.

Cllr Maslen left the meeting at 21:15

062 Event Grant Funding

Members received and considered a report from a Working Group set up to consider how the Council may consider and award annual funding to community events which are not eligible for funding under the Council's grant aid scheme. While an organisation can apply to the small grant aid scheme on an annual basis, large grants of over £2,000 can only be applied for every other year. These impacts funding the council has historically granted to community events on an annual basis.

When agreeing the amended grant aid scheme procedure Councillors acknowledged that they would consider funding for specific annual community events supported by the Council separately as part of the budget process each year.

Members considered the proposed procedure, and it was clarified that;

- In September each year any eligible organisation will be invited to make a funding request and presentation to the Promotion and Events Committee.
- The Promotion and Events committee will consider the eligibility of the proposed event, its community value and offer.
- The Promotion and Events Committee will make recommendations to the Finance and Governance Committee on whether funding for any event should be put forward to the budget setting process.
- The Finance and Governance Committee will consider any recommendation received in the context of the overall budget and make recommendations to the Full Council.

Any organisation is welcome to attend but the purpose of the process is to provide a way those organisations/events which are not eligible for the grant aid scheme can seek funding. In the first instance any organisation should be directed to the Grant Aid Scheme.

It was noted that for the upcoming financial year the Promotion and Events Committee would need to consider any funding requests from identified organisations at its November meeting.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council approves the draft procedure outlining the consideration of grant funding for annual events which exceed £2,000 and are not eligible for funding under the Council's Grant Aid policy.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council approve the draft criteria that must be met for the awarding of funding for an event.

063 Priory Centre Budgets

Members received and considered Priory Centre budgets as at the end of July 2024 when the Centre ceased trading. Members noted that income budgets were on target or exceeded the budgeted income. There were also overspends in catering and café costs, which were partly impacted by reduced budgets in anticipation of closing and the close and relocation itself.

Members noted that one the HDC contribution was factored in the position at the end of July 2024 would be a small surplus. However, staffing and utility costs will continue to be incurred during the Priory Centre redevelopment.

A Member commented that the figures were healthy, and it was a positive position.

064 Operational Equipment

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk which set out a request that the Council invest in a new item of operational equipment that will help the operations team carry out their duties and provide efficiencies in the services the Council undertakes.

The Operations Manager and Senior Maintenance Technician were present to speak on the matter and take questions from Members. Members commented that they were in support of an investment that would provide efficiencies in the team and allow them to undertake work that there currently isn't time to address, more traditional operations work and take on additional and more varied work.

The Operations Manager highlighted several outstanding jobs that are difficult to progress with the current pressures on the team. The proposed equipment would not only speed up time consuming jobs such as hedge cutting, it would also reduce the number of operatives needing to spend time on those jobs. This would allow the Operations Manager to reallocate resource to other areas. The Operations Manager commented the equipment, its capability and the efficiency it offers would allow the team to help improve St Neots public realm.

A Member queried whether the model proposed was the right model and if it could be bought seconded had. The Chairperson of Operations and Amenities Commented that the Committee had consider a lease option, but it was not felt this would offer best value to the Council.

A Member queried the goal of making the team more efficient and the benefit that has for residents versus the cost. If more resource is to be freed up then how will this benefit residents. The Senior Maintenance Technician highlighted jobs that need to be undertaken such as new bins and regular treating of benches that resource could be freed up for which would improve the public street scene.

Members discussed challenges around storage of the equipment. It was noted that floor space could be freed by up staking as the equipment is a forklift. A Member commented that this may create some issues with access to certain things if the machinery is in use and off site. The Operations Manager would need to manage this.

A Member raised benefits around health and safety for maintenance technicians.

It was proposed and seconded that the Committee recommend the purchase of the proposed equipment and that it is funded from the Council's General Reserves.

A Member asked that the recommendation to Council is accompanied by some additional detail on specific benefits that would arise as a result of using the equipment and the benefits to residents.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that to facilitate the Operations Team's efficient and flexible delivery of services the Council purchase an Avant-AV 760I and suitable attachments at a cost of £60,627 from the Council's General Reserve.

065 External Audit

Members received and noted the outcome of the 2023/24 external audit and that there were no actions or recommendations arising from the audit. Thanks were expressed to all those officers involved in the auditing process.

066 Equipment Hire Policy

Members received and considered a draft equipment hire policy for Council equipment which had been recommended for adoption by the Operations and Amenities Committee. It was commented that appendix a was not available and queried whether this could be brought forward for consideration as part of the policy. A member also requested that any costs linked to the hire out of equipment be included.

Members discussed the replacement of equipment when it is broken while used by a hirer. It may be that the equipment itself is old and should depreciation on the value of the asset be recognised.

Members requested that the specific reference to 'May Day' is removed from the policy.

Members asked that an amended policy be brought back to the Committee.

067 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the date of the next scheduled Finance and Governance Committee meeting would be 19th November 2024 at 7:15pm.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

DRAFT

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Date:	29 th OCTOBER 2024
Title:	EVENTS GRANT FUNDING
Contact Officer/S:	RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the committee with recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee on the approach to be taken by the Council in considering the awarding of funds to events which are not eligible for annual funding under the new grant aid policy.
- 1.2 To seek approval of the criteria, grant funding applications for events should meet if they are to be considered for funding by the Council.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council approves the draft procedure outlining the consideration of grant funding for annual events which exceed £2,000 and are not eligible for funding under the Council's Grant Aid policy.
- 2.2 That the Council approve the draft criteria that must be met for the awarding of funding for an event.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Town Council introduced a new grant aid policy to help manage the pressure placed on the grants aid budget by the number and size of applications coming forward. The new policy puts a restriction on organisations being awarded funding over £2,000 in consecutive years. Members noted that this meant that annual community events which had historically received council funding would no longer be able to do so on an annual basis, therefore risking the viability of the event and its long-term future. As such the Finance and Governance Committee established a working group to bring forward recommendations on how the council could consider awarding funding to annual events through its budget setting process.
- 3.2 Any organisation is welcome to apply for grant funding from the Council's Grant Aid Scheme and this should be the first process for any organisation. Where an organisation is not eligible because they have received funding over £2,000 in the previous year the following recommended process will be used.

4. Recommended Process

- 4.1 Where a funding request does not fit within the Council's Small Grant Aid Criteria and an application is for over £2,000 on an annual basis (examples such as Living History Festival, St Neots Folk Festival), members of the working group suggested the following approach:
 - For 2025-26 budget setting, the organisations falling into the above category who received grant funding for a community event last year, will be asked to submit proposals and funding requests to SNTC to be considered as part of the budget-setting process.

AGENDA ITEM 5

ATTACHMENT 7

- Each of the organisations will be asked to make a presentation to the Promotions and Events Committee, who will consider the funding request and put forward a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee on any funding it would like to recommend is considered as part of the budget setting process. Any such recommendation will be shown as a separate budget line and will be subject to approval by F&G and the Full Council.
- Officers will need to liaise with the organisations who were awarded grants of over £2,000 in 2024/2025 to invite them for a presentation to Promotions & Events meeting in November. Members acknowledge the fact that process is a transitional from the 2023/24 grant aid procedure and that flexibility is needed.

4.2 To summarise, the proposed process will be;

- 1) In August the organisers of any annual community events who have been recipients of Council grant funding in a previous year but are no longer eligible will be invited to put forward a request to the Promotion and Events Committee.
- 2) The Promotion and Events Committee will consider any requests/applications at a meeting in September.
- 3) The Promotion and Events Committee will make recommendations to the Finance and Governance Committee on awarding funding to an event as part of the Council's next year's budget.
- 4) The Finance and Governance Committee will consider the recommendations of the Promotions and Events Committee in the context of the wider budget and make a recommendation on any funding to the Full Council as part of the overall budget setting.

4.3 Due to time constraints in the current financial year the process for the 2025/26 budget will need to be condensed into November 2024.

5. Recommended Criteria

5.1 The criteria for event grant funding to be considered by the Promotion and Events Committee is recommended as follows;

- 1) To be considered for funding events will need to be based in St Neots and the Council will give extra weighting to events open to all residents. If events are not free but subsidised, then the Council will need to consider the cost of the subsidy per attendee as part of its decision making.
- 2) The organisers/organisations of the events should preferably be St Neots based.
- 3) An organisation will need to be able to evidence a proven track record of delivering events if it is to be considered for annual funding of above £2,000.
- 4) Any organisation who has not applied for grant funding for an event before can apply for funding through the Council's small grant aid scheme.
- 5) Each organisation will be expected to market the event to get a wider audience and provide detailed feedback on the event.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 If funding for events is to be included in the Council's annual revenue budget there will be an impact on the overall budget that will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process. Therefore, under the proposed process any recommendation from the Promotion and Events Committee will need to be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee in the context of the overall budget.

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Date:	29 th October 2024
Title:	Operations Equipment - Avant-AV 760I Compact Articulated Loader
Contact Officer:	Operations Manager

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To receive and consider a recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee that the Council invest in an Avant-AV 760i as part of investing in the Operations Teams service delivery.
- 1.2 This report provides the information provided to the Operations and Amenities and Finance and Governance Committees on which the recommendation was resolved. The report relates to the potential investment in an Avant-AV 760I compact articulated loader to enhance the operational efficiency of St Neots Town Council. The equipment is considered in the context of the Council's growing needs related to maintenance, project execution, and environmental initiatives.

2. Recommendation from Finance and Governance Committee

- 2.1 To facilitate the Operations Team's efficient and flexible delivery of services the Council purchase an Avant-AV 760I and suitable attachments at a cost of £60,627 from the Council's General Reserve.

3. Background

- 3.1 The operations team currently takes on a wide array of jobs throughout the town including grass cutting, hedge cutting, waste management, planting, watering and general maintenance. The team's management of cemeteries also involves regular grave digging. As well as this the team's work involves specific one-off projects (i.e. Forget-me-Not Garden, Council offices work) and many events. The Operations Manager and his team consider equipment and machinery in the context of meeting this versatile workload.
- 3.2 The Council is responsible for the maintenance of over 9KM of hedge row, which is currently cut manually with handheld hedge cutters. This work is spread across the town, for example, one site alone has 500M worth of hedge work.
- 3.3 The Council cuts a large area of grass within the town, partly on its own sites but also as part of a grass cutting contract with Cambridgeshire County Council. There are some areas of verging which the Council is not equipped to maintain, as our only current way of addressing it would be through operatives using strimmers and the need for temporary road closure to make the cutting safe.
- 3.4 The Team is always looking at new ways/equipment to make the operations team run more efficiently and believe that the machine outlined in this report would be a significant asset of the Council and the work it undertakes, particularly because of the machine's versatility and flexibility.

4. Equipment – Avant-AV 7601 compact articulated loader

- 4.1 The machinery the Operations and Amenities Committee is recommending the Council purchase is an Avant-AV 7601 compact articulated loader. The versatility of the machine and the reduction in manual handling

together with the ability to buy additional attachments in futures years will offer the team a flexibility and efficiency required to manage the operations work.

4.2 The machinery will also open opportunities for doing additional work, such as cutting areas not currently under SNTC or weed clearance.

4.3 The specification for the machinery is attached to this report.

5. Benefit of Investment

5.1 The machine will result in efficiencies in task time and operatives across operations team's task. By way of example of at present cutting the hedgerows in the Council's ownership/responsibility would take a team of 4 operatives more than 2 days to complete. The resulting cuttings would fill the green waste skip adding a further £200+ cost each time.

5.2 The Avant-AV 760I and rotary hedge cutter attachment could complete this task with 2 employees in under three hours. In addition, the rotary hedge cutter attachment mulches the hedge cuttings down so that there is minimal clear up, resulting in a significant drop in waste management and easier use of mulch across council sites.

5.3 Using a flail mower attachment the machine would also allow the operations team to better maintain some areas which it is currently unable to, especially embankments along roads. At present these could only be cut with strimmers and this is not possible due to locations next to busy roads and the need for support closures and safety requirements.

5.4 The machine would allow the Council to expand on the type and amount of work it does, opening up further discussion with partners around grass cutting responsibilities and agreements. In addition, the operative resource time freed up would allow the team to better manage wider workload.

5.5 The Operations Manager and Senior Maintenance Technician recommended the Council look to purchase an Avant-AV760I due to the large level of horticultural work carried out by the operations team on a regular basis. The equipment will significantly reduce manual handling, hand arm vibration levels and general fatigue within the team that results from long time hand help equipment use needed to manage the current workload. Furthermore, speeding up jobs such as hedge cutting, mowing and re-wilding areas allowing us to work on other maintenance jobs and projects that sometimes get overlooked due to the level of work and time available. The purchase of this machine could potentially allow us to take on more work from county council/local parishes bringing in a higher revenue from the works we currently take on.

5.6 The Operations Manager acknowledges that there are storage restraints at the depot building. However, the proposed machinery also works as a forklift, which would allow the team to introduce better storage systems in the building, better using space and creating more free floor space. It is acknowledged that this will need to be carefully planned to ensure items remain available when needed, particularly if the new equipment is in use off-site.

5.7 Additional attachments for differing functions can be invested in to increase the flexibility of the equipment over the coming years, widening what the Council could do.

5.8 The Operations Manager feels the equipment and the impact it will have on the teams delivery and resources will allow more work to be done which will benefit and improve the public realm and street scene for those areas under St Neots Town Council's management.

6. Specific Benefits

- 6.1 The Operations Manager and Senior Maintenance Technician have highlighted a number of tasks/work areas which will benefit from the resource freed up by through the equipment efficiencies. While benefits are not limited to the list below, it highlights tangible improvements the Council will be able to deliver.

IMMEDIATE TASKS/BENEFITS	ON GOING BENEFITS
<p>Installing 20 new litter bins and concrete bases.</p> <p>Install commemoration benches currently in storage (ESCA bench WW1 bench)</p> <p>Painting of cemetery gates, railings and fences.</p> <p>Brush cutting street furniture on the grass verge round.</p> <p>Cemetery fruit tree maintenance (replacing tree stakes and straps for new memorial markers, pollarding).</p> <p>Path edging.</p> <p>Flower bed structure maintenance.</p> <p>Cleaning and treating of SNTC benches.</p> <p>Depot 'housekeeping'.</p>	<p>Cemetery bench maintenance (as per policy) on regular basis</p> <p>Bus stop maintenance (jet washing, weeding, painting etc..) on regular basis.</p> <p>Playground preventative maintenance (cleaning play equipment, oiling moving parts, installing new equipment) to help avoid issues building.</p> <p>Regular gutter weed removal and on going path edging.</p> <p>Toilet maintenance increase (painting, plumbing, graffiti removal, deep cleaning).</p> <p>Depot housekeeping regularly to best manage space available.</p> <p>Vehicle cleaning (inside and out).</p> <p>Notice board cleaning.</p> <p>Flower bed maintenance (weeding, deadheading, annual and perennial).</p> <p>Flag pole maintenance.</p> <p>Tree maintenance increased in house</p> <p>Buildings maintenance across all SNTC buildings increased in house (gutter cleaning, painting, general repairs).</p>
Further Benefits	
<p>Greater flexibility within planned works to be responsive to matters and needs as they arise across the Council.</p> <p>More resource to allow the Council to use the in-house skills of technicians (electrics, joinery etc) across the Council and the savings that makes by operating internal solutions.</p> <p>More time to focus on ensuring the traditional operations services are deliver to a good standard.</p> <p>More resource to work with other groups/organisations as part of playing a role in the wider improvement in St Neots open space, play areas and public realms.</p> <p>Ability to look at taking on additional work or areas from other bodies as part of devolution or maintenance contracts.</p>	

7. Financial Implications

Avant-AV 760I Compact articulated loader	£49,865.00	£5,983.80	x1	£43,881.20
Road lighting kit	£1,400.00	£168.00	x1	£1,232.00
Avant A36535 1600 General bucket	£985.00	£118.20	x1	£866.80
Avant A448736 S30 Hydraulic side shift	£7,490.00	£898.80	x1	£6,591.20
Avant A435550 S30 Rotary hedge cutter	£5,200.00	£624.00	x1	£4,576.00
Avant A37505 S30 Flail mower	£3,210.00	£385.20	x1	£2,824.80
A49063 Side weight kit for S30	£745.00	£89.40	x1	£655.60
Subtotal				£60,627.60

7.1 The cost of the equipment is set out above. The loader itself is separated from the cost of attachments, with the Council able to invest in those swappable attachments it needs to complete its work. This would allow the Council to invest in attachments over successive years to take advantage of the machine's flexibility.

7.2 The Finance and Governance Committee is recommending that the funds for the equipment are taken from the Council's General Reserve, for which there is sufficient funds available.

8. Legal Powers

8.1 The action undertaken is covered by the Localism Act 2011, s.1 the General Power of Competence, for which St Neots Town Council is eligible and is a power of first resort allowing the Council to do anything an individual can do.

SPECIFICATIONS – AVANT 760i

LIFT CAPACITY

**1400
kg**

ENGINE POWER

**57 hp
diesel**

LIFT HEIGHT

3.1 m

SPEED

**26
km/h**

Avant 760i with turbocharged common rail diesel engine complies with the US Tier 4 Final emission regulations. It doesn't need a diesel particulate filter nor AdBlue/urea.

Avant 760i with turbocharged common rail diesel engine complies with the EU Stage V emission regulations, equipped with diesel oxidation catalyst (DOC) and diesel particulate filter (DPF) with automatic regeneration.

SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH	3060 mm
WIDTH	1450 mm
HEIGHT	2110 mm
WEIGHT	2100 kg
STANDARD WHEELS	400/50-15 TR
TRANSMISSION, DRIVE	hydrostatic Avant Optidrive™
PULLING FORCE MAX.	1880 kp
DRIVE SPEED MAX.	26 km/h
AUX. HYDRAULICS OIL FLOW / PRESSURE	80 l/min 225 bar
TURNING RADIUS INSIDE/OUTSIDE	1240/2780 mm
LIFTING HEIGHT TO PIVOT POINT	3100 mm
MAX. LIFTING CAPACITY (HYDR.)	2100 kg
MAX. TIPPING LOAD *	1400 kg
MAX. BREAKOUT FORCE / 50 CM	1700 kg
ENGINE MAKE AND TYPE	Kohler KDI 1903 TCR Stage V
ENGINE OUTPUT (ECE R120)	42kW (57 hp)
MAXIMUM TORQUE	220 Nm @ 1500 rpm
FUEL	Diesel
PRODUCT NO:	A438139

*) with extra counterweights

PULLING FORCE

WHEEL SIZE	DRIVE SPEED	PULLING FORCE
400/50-15	26 km/h	1600 kp

WIDTH

WHEEL SIZE	PROFILE	WIDTH
27x8.50-15	TR	1080 mm
26x12.00-12	TR or grass	1350 mm
320/60-12 HD	TR	1350 mm
320/55-15	TR or grass	1360 mm
400/50-15	TR or grass	1450 mm

HEIGHT WITH CAB

.	26X12.00-12 OR 320/60-12	320-55/15*
L Cab	2060 mm	2094 mm
LX Cab (735 only)	2078 mm	2112 mm
DLX Cab	2105 mm	2139 mm
DLX with A/C on the roof	2241 mm	2275 mm

*) With 400/50-15 machine is 30 mm higher

DIMENSIONS



ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Date:	29 October 2024
Title:	Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan Consultation
Contact Officer:	Town Clerk
Author:	Senior Administrator: Maxine Wright

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with recommendations from the Local Plan Consultation Working Group on responses to the Land Availability Assessments consultation.
- 1.2 To seek a resolution from the Full Council to support and submit the recommend responses proposes by the working group which will form part of the formal response to the Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan Consultation, in particular the land availability assessments and sustainability assessments.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To receive and consider recommended responses to the land availability and sustainability assessments included in Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan Consultation. (see attached)
- 2.2 That the Council produce and share a leaflet advising residents how they can respond to the consultation.
- 2.3 That Members encourage as many residents as possible to respond to the consultation and that the Council actively signpost residents in their wards to the consultation website.
- 2.4 That the Council act as an 'Agent' so as to be able to submit responses on behalf of residents who are unable to do so via the consultation website.
- 2.5 That the Council note the Working Group will be considering the Further Issues and Options Paper and Sustainability Appraisal document over the next three weeks with a view to bringing forward a recommended consultation response to these documents at the November Town Council meeting. Members are encouraged to provide any comments in relation to those documents to the Working Group prior to 15th November 2024 so this can be factored into the group's considerations.

3. Background

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire District Council is undertaking the review and preparation of its Local Plan.
- 3.2 A Local Plan sets out a vision and policy framework for the future development of the district and it will be used to judge planning applications.
- 3.3 The Local Plan Update is currently in its next stage of public engagement – this takes the form of a consultation, scheduled to take place between 18th September to 27th November (10 weeks) and focuses on three documents (see 4.3)
- 3.4 At a Meeting of the Town Council held on 24th September the Council resolved to establish a Working Group to consider the consultation and bring forward recommendations on responding to that consultation.

4. Information

- 4.1 Key information on the sites submitted to the Local Plan under the Call for Sites can be found here - [7 - Southern Huntingdonshire LAA](#)
- 4.2 All key information can be found on HDC's website: [Huntingdonshire District Council Consultation Home - Keystone](#)
- 4.3 HDC are consulting on three documents:
 - 4.3.1 Further Issues and Options - asks participants to choose options for a series of issues or topics that are key to the future planning of Huntingdonshire. For example, 'Tackling Flooding and Water', 'Housing Figures and Requirement' and 'The Approach to Climate Change'.
 - 4.3.2 Land Availability Assessments - 369 sites were submitted to the council for a range of uses. The documents provide an opportunity to give feedback on the assessments of these sites and their potential suitability for development. The number of sites needed for the new local plan will be dependent on the number of homes and jobs required and our growth strategy.
 - 4.3.3 Sustainability Appraisals - assesses the options within the Further Issues and Options paper and sites submitted for development against environmental, social and economic objectives.
- 4.4 The recommendations attached to this report focus on 4.3.2 'Land Availability Assessments'.

5. Recommended Consultation Responses

- 5.1 The Working Group have reviewed each site individually and provided recommendations on a response to each St Neots site included in the Land Availability Assessments. The Working Group has also considered sites outside of the St Neots Parish which are adjacent to the parish boundary and will impact on St Neots.
- 5.2 Recommended responses are attached to this report (Appendix A).

LAA = Land Availability Assessment
SA = Sustainability Assessment

APPENDIX A – AGENDA ITEM 6 / ATTACHMENT 9

St Neots 1: Land North of Priory Park, St Neots			
Address and Proposal	HDC Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: The land to the north of Priory Park and Mill Lane, east and west of Huntingdon Road/B1043</p> <p>Proposal: Residential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and/or affordable homes. Commercial: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail Supporting Infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community facility. Open Spaces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural, green or open spaces: Extension to Priory Park, allotments/community orchard, wetland wildlife and biodiversity net gain enhancements. </p>	<p>HDC assessment – in combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site is inappropriate for residential development Will not support sustainable place-making The achievability of the development is unclear because of the presence of overhead powerlines, odour and flood mitigation, noise and vibrational mitigation resultant from proximity to the railway line Is appropriate for green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain and potential extension to Priory Park subject to provision of safe crossing(s) If a Priory Park extension is taken forward, provision for car parking may be required slightly reducing the net developable area for green space uses The site is wholly greenfield and grade 2 agricultural land Flood zone 2 covers the entirety of the western parcel of land, flood zone 1 is only present on just over half of the eastern parcel; flood zones 3a and 3b are also present Proximity to St Neots water recycling centre increases the potential odour impact on future residents The site relates more closely to the countryside, the proposal would create an isolated pocket of residential development exacerbated by its topography, with little relationship to its surrounding countryside location or existing residential properties Proposed uses for green infrastructure, and biodiversity net gain would support and enhance the landscape setting, biodiversity and ecology, and the setting of the Great River Ouse within and adjacent to the Great Ouse Valley priority area. 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flood risk to surrounding areas. Even with the proposed retention ponds, any residential development would increase the risk of flooding to nearby areas, residential properties and roads. Increased traffic to and from the town centre, the A1 and other roads. The impact of increased traffic using the bridge through Little Paxton. Visual impact on the landscape and how any proposed development will integrate with the existing housing developments and Priory Park. Potential of developers increasing the proposed number of houses on the site. Historically this has happened on several large developments. Loss of green open space. The loss of agricultural land and the long-term impact this may have on the sustainability of food supplies. The location of the proposed development in relation to the main train line, sewage works and power lines. Welcome the proposals to use the site as green open spaces to increase the biodiversity and provide cycle paths and links to Great Paxton and Paxton Pits Nature Reserve however there are concerns over the cost implications and if these schemes are achievable. Will the land be passed over for public ownership? Evidence that Bloor Homes have built on existing flood zones, for example, Riversfield in Little Paxton and the impact of building in Buckden has had an impact on flooding in surrounding areas therefore we have concerns that they may build on the flood zones of this site. The working group recognise that there are opportunities however the site is problematic. Apply to HDC to designate this land as Green Open Space. 	<p>Strongly object to the site being developed for residential use.</p>

St Neots 2: Land East of Brook Road, Eaton Ford			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Land East of Brook Road, St Neots</p> <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and/or affordable housing Specialist housing <p>Open spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural, green or open spaces for a variety of uses Biodiversity net gain opportunities 	<p>HDC assessment – in combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is wholly greenfield and grade 3 agricultural land The site is constrained by flood risk, over half of the site is within flood zone 2 and some within flood zone 3a and 3b The site would fundamentally impact the landscape setting, biodiversity and ecology of the area, wider countryside, nature designations and valued green space. The site would fundamentally impact a significant part of a green infrastructure corridor associated with the River Great Ouse priority landscape area. Residential development on this site would have significant light impacts. Employment, primary education, shops, cultural and leisure facilities and public transport are within an accessible distance. The site is inappropriate for residential development and would fundamentally impact the landscape setting The achievability of upgraded accesses sufficient for the proposed development could present a financial and physical constraint 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over half the site is in Flood Zone 2. Surface water risk. Fundamentally part of the green lung going through the town. The land contains a pond. The site essentially contains fly ash from the power station, concerns as this is not mentioned. Impact on residential houses abutting the site and footpath. Vehicular access to the site would have a huge impact on existing residents. Increased traffic. Loss of green open space. An inconsistency of the land availability assessment in relation to the number of proposed dwellings, numbers range from 120 – 600 homes. Apply to HDC to designate this land as Green Open Space. 	<p>Strongly Object to proposals for this site.</p>
St Neots 3: Peppercorn Meadows, Eaton Socon, St Neots			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Land north of 17 Peppercorn Lane, Eaton Socon, St Neots</p> <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist housing 	<p>HDC assessment – in combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is wholly greenfield and grade 3 agricultural land The site is not constrained by fluvial flood risk, but surface water flood risk is present on site The site would fundamentally impact the landscape setting and gateway to a green infrastructure corridor associated with the River Great Ouse priority landscape area Residential development in this location would create an isolated pocket of development, with little relationship to its surrounding countryside location The site could impact the setting of a scheduled monument Employment, primary education, shops, cultural and leisure facilities and public transport are within an accessible distance The site is inappropriate for residential development and would fundamentally impact the landscape setting and gateway to a green infrastructure corridor. The achievability of upgraded accesses sufficient for the proposed development could present a financial and physical constraint as could mitigation of overhead electricity lines and ground contamination as a result of asbestos. 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development would have an overall impact on residents of Peppercorn Lane. The land is agricultural however it is not being used currently. The land is Green Open Space. 	<p>Strongly Object to the proposals for the site.</p>

St Neots 4: Land North of the A428, St Neots			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Land north of the A428 and west of the River Great Ouse, St Neots</p> <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Commercial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment <p>Commercial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leisure uses (new sporting and leisure facilities) <p>Open Spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gain 	<p>HDC assessment – in combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97% is in flood zone 2 and around half suffers from surface water flooding too • Most is urban land but around a quarter is classified as grade 1 agricultural land • It is previously developed land • Good access to education, employment, social and community facilities • Some challenges in integrating development with adjoining uses • Liable to noise and light pollution from the adjoining school and sports uses • Is inappropriate for residential use due to flood risk • The current use as a football ground should be retained unless well-located, equal or better quality provision is provided. 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <p>As this site failed the land availability assessments therefore no comments are required.</p>	<p>No Comment due to site failing land availability assessments.</p>
St Neots 5: Albert Hall Memorial Field, Hall Road, Eynesbury, St Neots			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Hall Road, Eynesbury, St Neots</p> <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market and/or affordable housing 	<p>HDC assessment – in combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97% is in flood zone 2 and around half suffers from surface water flooding too. • Most is urban land but around a quarter is classified as grade 1 agricultural land. • It is previously developed land. • Good access to education, employment, social and community facilities. • Some challenges in integrating development with adjoining uses. • Liable to noise and light pollution from the adjoining school and sports uses • Is inappropriate for residential use due to flood risk • The current use as a football ground should be retained unless well-located, equal or better quality provision is provided 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of available space for young people to play football. • Access to the site and impact on residents. • The site is next to public and private leisure facilities which creates a natural zone, and such facilities should be retained. 	<p>Strongly object to the proposal.</p>

St Neots 6: Land South West of Potton Road, Eynesbury, St Neots			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Land to the south west of Potton Road (B1046) and north of A428</p> <p>Proposal: Residential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and/or affordable homes 	<p>HDC assessment – in combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is wholly greenfield and grade 2 agricultural land. The site is not constrained by fluvial flood risk with minimal surface water flood risk. The has no direct relationship to the landscape. The topographical challenges could influence the layout of buildings and elevations. The site could relate well to Wintringham Park to the north once complete having the potential to be integrated with the community. The site is within reasonable distance to St Neots town centre, a primary school, employment opportunities and the railway station May be appropriate for development in the long-term contributing to the housing needs of the district and supporting sustainable place-making. Would require careful consideration of building elevations. The achievability of the site would be reliant upon mitigation of overhead electricity lines, safe response to the presence of a gas pipeline, and mitigation of noise and vibrational impacts due to proximity to the railway line. 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the Abbotsley development is granted permission as well of this site, it could prove problematic for road users/bottle neck of traffic. Concerns in terms of the bridge and no footpath for pedestrian use. The Working Group would like to review this proposal along with neighbouring sites to consider any additional impact on these areas as it felt only one should be approved due to the negative impact if more than one was approved. The location is not a particularly nice place to live. Concerns over the quality of life for those living in this location would be poor. Phase 3 of Wintringham will be commercial, on the other side of the road to this proposal will be an industrial area. Any proposed residential could potentially be dwarfed by the industrial area. 	<p>Neutral to the proposal.</p>
St Neots 7: Land North East of Wintringham Park, St Neots			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: North east of Cambridge Road roundabout, east of B1428 Cambridge Road and north of A428(T), east of Wintringham Park, St Neots</p> <p>Proposal: Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and/or affordable housing. Specialist housing. Custom and self-build housing Nursing and care homes. <p>Commercial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment <p>Retail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistics, distribution <p>Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewable energy 	<p>HDC assessment – in combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is wholly greenfield land and grade 2 agricultural land The site is not constrained by fluvial or surface water flood risk The site is less than one hectare and would contribute to the government's aspiration to promote sites suitable for SME builders The site may be appropriate for development provided this was not residential as amenity levels would be inadequate. Landscaping to address this visual impact would be essential to the compatibility of the scheme with the form and character of the area. Access to the site by vehicle in a safe manner could be a barrier to the safety of road users and pedestrians if residential or commercial options were chosen due to proximity to the roundabout. 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is not appropriate for residential use. <p>The Working Group recommend that the land should be used for commercial or industrial use.</p>	<p>Support the site for commercial or industrial use only.</p>

St Neots 8: Land East of Loves Farm (Tithe Farm extension), St Neots			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Land East of Loves Farm and north of Cambridge Road (B1428), St Neots</p> <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and/ or affordable housing Specialist housing Custom and self-build housing Nursing or care homes <p>Commercial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment Retail Commercial leisure <p>Supporting infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Health uses Renewable energy <p>Open Space Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural, green and open space Biodiversity net gain 	<p>HDC assessment – in combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the site is within flood zone 1, 0.3ha of the site is in flood zone 3b The site is predominantly greenfield and grade 2 agricultural land. Preservation and enhancement of listed building its setting and existing woodland would be required. The site could relate well to Loves Farm 2 to the west once complete having the potential to be integrated with the community. Landscape impact could be mitigated if masterplanned effectively due to a steep rise in topography to the north of the site mitigation measures to the north and east would require addressing. Proximity to the new A428 and potentially could increase the likelihood noise light, and visual pollution although development in this area has demonstrated this can be mitigated The site is close to St Neots town centre, railway, Primary Academy and employment providing potential employment and social opportunities. Active travel opportunities would be achievable from pavement that adjoins the site frontage, which can provide active travel opportunities May be appropriate for development in the long-term contributing to the housing needs of the district and supporting sustainable place-making. Flood mitigation would be required Linkages into Loves Farm 2 to create integration are uncertain until reserved matters on Loves Farm 2 are confirmed. Major infrastructure would be required to support development. Access to A road networks would provide good long term road connectivity Mitigation would be required to relocate or integrate powerlines Biodiversity, landscape and environmental impacts of the site would need to be addressed. 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns raised over the size of the development of the existing infrastructure of the town and how the increase in the population will affect services including transport, health care, education - especially secondary education, leisure and retail. East/west rail may come through the site. The final route hasn't been agreed so this may need to be considered if it is near the development. Tithe Farm to become a community hub is welcomed. Concerns about Hen Brook – land between A421 and A428 expected to become development land for additional housing. Cycleways and connections to other areas of the town are vital. The proposed development requires its own hub to include shops, health and leisure facilities. Green Spaces – to include football/sports areas Community facilities including playing fields Public swimming facilities Concerns of the close proximity to the A428 and the amount of traffic coming off this major route through the town. Increase demand for parking in the town and Station Carpark. Impact on increased traffic using Little Paxton Bridge. Concerns of the proximity of the site to one of the major roundabouts of the A428 and the amount of traffic coming off a major route. Concerns with the overall infrastructure capacity such as utilities – electricity and gas, sewage works, digital capacity broadband, water. <p>Some concerns can be mitigated through the planning process.</p>	<p>Neutral to the proposals. If some of the concerns can be mitigated the working group, the proposals could be supported.</p> <p>SNTC would like to see the landowners of Abbotsley sites1,2,3 and St Neots 8 engage with each other to consider these sites together and holistically to ensure the facilities and infrastructure provision supports the communities moving into these areas. This includes Primary and Secondary Education, local amenities such as shops, health care services, leisure and sport facilities and open green spaces.</p>

Abbotsley 1: Land at Potton Road (Rectory Farm), Eynesbury Hardwick

Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Land at Potton Road (Rectory Farm), Eynesbury Hardwick</p> <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Market and/or affordable housing <p>Commercial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">EmploymentRetail <p>Supporting Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Local community centre (if required)Primary school (if required)Health facilities (if required) <p>Open spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Natural, green or open spacesBiodiversity net gain opportunities	<p>HDC assessment - combination the outcomes of the LAA and SA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The site is not constrained by fluvial flood risk but surface water flood risk runs through the centre of the siteThe site is predominantly greenfield and grade 2 agricultural land.The site could relate well to Wintringam Park to the north once complete having the potential to be integrated with the community.Integration with Bedford Local Plan allocation Policy HOU Little Barford New Settlement is uncertain.There is potential for the East West Rail route to dissect the site meaning integration may be difficult to achieve.Impact on the countryside would be significant due to the site's current isolated location and sizeProximity to the new A428(A421) and potentially East West Rail could increase the likelihood of noise light, vibrational and visual pollutionThe site has opportunity to provide green space and biodiversity net gain opportunities. Access to the railway station is within reasonable distance, as is access to St Neots town centre.The site proposes employment and retail uses and could include a local community centre; primary school and land for health facilities. These could provide additional employment and social benefit to the new community.The site is within 1km of 10 ha natural greenspaceMay be appropriate for development in the long-term contributing to meeting the housing needs of the district and supporting sustainable place-makingMajor infrastructure would be required to support developmentIn addition to housing, the site would provide opportunities for employment, retail and proposes a community centre, primary school and health facilities if requiredAccess to A and B road networks would provide good long term road connectivityThe presence of major roads would require further measures to safely integrate the community and connect into St NeotsIntegration of existing residential properties may be requiredMitigation would be required to relocate or integrate powerlinesBiodiversity, landscape and environmental impacts of the site would need to be addressed	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Abbotsley sites1,2,3 and St Neots 8- SNTC would like to see the landowners all engage to consider these sites together and holistically to ensure the facilities and infrastructure provision supports the communities moving into these areas. This includes Primary and Secondary Education, local amenities such as shops, health care services, leisure and sport facilities and open green spaces.	<p>Support the proposals</p> <p>SNTC would like to see the landowners of would like Abbotsley sites1,2,3 and St Neots 8 talk to each other to consider these sites together and holistically to ensure the facilities and infrastructure provision supports the communities moving into these areas. This includes Primary and Secondary Education, local amenities such as shops, health care services, leisure and sport facilities and open green spaces</p>

Abbotsley 2			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Land East of Wintringham Park, St Neots</p> <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and/or affordable housing Specialist housing Custom and self-build housing <p>Commercial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment <p>Supporting Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary school (if required) Community building (if required) <p>Open space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural, green or open spaces Biodiversity net gain opportunities Land to safeguard against flooding <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live/work hub & local shops (potential) 	<p>HDC assessment - combination the outcomes of the LAA and SA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the site is within flood zone 1, although flood zone 2 and 3a and some surface water flood risk are present The site is wholly greenfield and grade 2 agricultural land. The proposed rerouting of the A428(A421) increases the likelihood of noise, light, air and visual pollution as does the potential East West Rail route, which could impede comprehensive site development The site is reasonably accessible to St Neots town centre Potential additional retail could support the immediate needs of a new community The site could relate well to Wintringham Park to the west once complete having the potential to be integrated with the community (safe crossings and enhanced transport infrastructure permitting). Landscape impact would require significant mitigation Proximity to the new A428(A421) and potential East West Rail could potentially increase the likelihood of noise light, and visual pollution Has potential for development in the long term contributing to the housing needs of the district and supporting sustainable place-making Would require flood mitigation Would require significant infrastructure to create linkages into Wintringham Park Access to A road networks would provide good long term road connectivity Would be required to relocate or integrate powerlines Would require substantial landscaping to minimise the landscape impacts of development May be bisected by the proposed East West Rail route impeding integration or development of the site Would need to integrate public rights of way 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the following additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbotsley sites 1,2,3 and St Neots 8- SNTC would like to see the landowners engage with each other to consider these sites together and holistically to ensure the facilities and infrastructure provision supports the communities moving into these areas. This includes Primary and Secondary Education, local amenities such as shops, health care services, leisure and sport facilities and open green spaces. 	<p>Support the proposal</p> <p>SNTC would like to see the landowners of Abbotsley sites1,2,3 and St Neots 8 engage with each other to consider these sites together and holistically to ensure the facilities and infrastructure provision supports the communities moving into these areas. This includes Primary and Secondary Education, local amenities such as shops, health care services, leisure and sport facilities and open green spaces.</p>

Abbotsley 3			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Land East of St Neots</p> <p>Proposal: Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and /or affordable homes Specialist housing Custom and self-build housing <p>Commercial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment (including care home) <p>Supporting Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary school Community centre Health use <p>Open space uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural, green or open spaces Biodiversity net gain opportunities 	<p>HDC assessment - combination the outcomes of the LAA and SA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the site is within flood zone 1, flood zone 2 and 3a and some surface water flood risk are present. The site is wholly greenfield and grade 2 agricultural land. The proposed rerouting of the A428(A421) increases the likelihood of noise, light, air and visual pollution as does the potential East West Rail route The site is reasonably close to St Neots town centre, railway station, employment and education facilities Potential additional employment, primary school, community/health centre and retail could support the immediate needs of a new community The site could relate well to Wintringham Park to the west once complete having the potential to be integrated with the community (safe crossings and enhanced transport infrastructure permitting). Landscape impact would require significant mitigation associated with topographical challenge Proximity to the new A428(A421) and potential East West Rail could potentially could increase the likelihood of noise light, and visual pollution Has potential for development in the long term contributing to the housing needs of the district and supporting sustainable place-making. Would require flood mitigation Would require significant infrastructure to create linkages into Wintringham Park Would be required to relocate or integrate powerlines Would require substantial landscaping to minimise the landscape impacts of development May be bisected by the proposed East West Rail route impeding integration or development of the site. Would need to integrate public rights of way 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clarity about the options and total number of proposed dwellings for each option. Option A - queries to be raised on what the 70 Specialist housing homes are. Self-build – how many of these are planned for the site? Serious concerns of increased traffic flow – Steers Transport Consultants carried out a survey for CCC to look at the impact of the A428 on what effect it will have on traffic entering and leaving St Neots including all the new development. Need to check these concerns with the current plans for when the works are complete. There is already development right the way across the other side of the road (A428). How much of an issue is having development on both sides of the road for St Neots. Will this cause bottle neck situations with the increased volume of traffic. The Inner Circle did a DNA Report for St Neots. The outcome of the report highlighted that the town needed far KIBS use class (Knowledge Intensive Business Services) such as incubator units. It would be good to see KIBS included in the plans. Abbotsley sites1,2,3 and St Neots 8- SNTC would like to see the landowners all talk to each other to consider these sites together and holistically to ensure the facilities and infrastructure provision supports the communities moving into these areas. This includes Primary and Secondary Education, local amenities such as shops, health care services, leisure and sport facilities and open green spaces. 	<p>Support the proposal following review of current plans for the A428/A421 including the new roundabouts, junctions and slip roads to cross reference the concerns of the working group. SNTC would like to see the landowners of Abbotsley sites1,2,3 and St Neots 8 engage with each other to consider these sites together and holistically to ensure the facilities and infrastructure provision supports the communities moving into these areas. This includes Primary and Secondary Education, local amenities such as shops, health care services, leisure and sport facilities and open green spaces.</p>
Abbotsley 4			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Pear Tree Solar Farm, Abbotsley</p> <p>Proposal: Renewable Energy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar Farm 	<p>HDC assessment - combination the outcomes of the LAA and SA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is in flood zone 1 with surface water flood risk The site is wholly classified as grade 2 agricultural land. Consideration of impact on Eynesbury Hardwicke House may require mitigation The site use compatible with agricultural land with potential to positively impact on agricultural land quality one use is removed. Some agricultural uses would also be able to continue around and within the site. the proposed use is classified as essential infrastructure meaning development is compatible 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the following additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns of the use of green field site/agricultural land for the use of Solar Farm. Consider other solutions for solar energy such as industrial units roof spaces, central reservations of motorways such as in Norway. Individual wind turbines. 	<p>Support the proposal.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May help to contribute towards achieving net zero ambitions and address climate change • Is suitable for solar energy generation • Public Rights of Way would require integration 		
Abbotsley 5			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: North of Wintringham Hall, Cambridge Road, St Neots</p> <p>Proposal: Commercial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Logistics 	<p>HDC assessment - combination the outcomes of the LAA and SA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is not constrained by fluvial flood risk, or nature conservation designations, some surface water flooding is present • It is grade 2 agricultural land and wholly greenfield • The site has potential to adversely impact nearby listed buildings • The site is in proximity to St Neots train station and a public right of way, but no substantial active travel links are available to facilitate non-motorised vehicular commuting • The site would be surrounded by the existing A428 and new route of the A428(A421). The local transport network may be impacted by the proposed uses • The proposed use could increase light, odour and visual pollution • The site is in open countryside and landscape impact of development would require mitigation • Successful integration of properties within and just outside the site would require careful masterplanning • May be appropriate for employment and small logistics development • Would be surrounded by the new and old A428 which would require mitigation from light, air and visual pollution • Would require landscape integration • Would require a transport impact assessment and traffic movement and access solutions • Would require careful masterplanning to minimise impact on listed buildings and buildings within and nearby the site 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the following additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to see included in the proposal the specified use of the retail spaces. 	<p>Support the proposal.</p>
Abbotsley 6			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Abbotsley Golf Club</p> <p>Proposal: Residential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market and/or affordable housing • Specialist housing 	<p>HDC assessment - combination the outcomes of the LAA and SA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is not constrained by fluvial flood risk but some surface water flood risk is present The site is wholly greenfield and grade 2 agricultural land • The site is in an isolated countryside location and integration with nearby residential areas would not be feasible • The status of Bedford Local Plan proposed allocation HOU Little Barford New Settlement (where further integration is proposed is also currently unknown) • The proposed rerouting of the A428 increases the likelihood of noise, light, air and visual pollution as does the potential 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA.</p>	<p>Object to the proposal.</p>

	<p>East West Rail route, which could impede comprehensive site development dependant on its location within or adjacent to the site and further separating the site from the proposed Little Barford allocation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact on the countryside would be significant due to the site's current isolated location and size• Access to the railway station via motorised vehicle is within reasonable distance, as is access to St Neots town centre, education and employment opportunities.• Is not appropriate for development and does not supporting sustainable place-making• The site would be separated and dissected by the new A428(A421) and potentially East West Rail making integration with any potential development in Bedfordshire difficult to achieve without significant infrastructure and could impede achievability of development• Major infrastructure would be required to support development		
Little Paxton 1			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Land North of St James Road, Little Paxton</p> <p>Proposal: Residential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Market and/or affordable housing	<p>HDC assessment - combination the outcomes of the LAA and SA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The site is not constrained by fluvial flood risk and surface water flood risk is negligible• The site is wholly greenfield land and non-agricultural land• The site is within proximity of designated nature conservation areas Landscape impact would be minimal and no heritage designations are affected• The site is close to St Neots town centre and railway station, multiple culture and leisure facilities, a primary school and concentrations of employment providing sustainable employment, social opportunities and sustainable transport options• Has potential to provide development of a scale that could be integrated into the existing place and community• Would need to provide safe and suitable means of access by motorised vehicle and active travel• Would need to address any impact on nature conservation designations and trees and hedgerows• May require ground contamination remediation• Address presence and/or integration of the public right of way	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not feel the number of proposed homes will have an impact on the current infrastructure apart from Little Paxton bridge.	<p>Support the proposal.</p>

Little Paxton 2			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Land West of Little Paxton</p> <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and/or affordable housing Custom and self-build housing Nursing and care homes <p>Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associated social/community facilities <p>Open Spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural, green or open spaces for a variety of uses Biodiversity net gain opportunities 	<p>HDC assessment - combination the outcomes of the LAA and SA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is not constrained by fluvial flood risk or heritage designations and surface water flood risk is negligible It is grade 2 agricultural land and is wholly greenfield The site is in a sensitive landscape location which would require strategic landscaping and integration of existing woodland address topographical challenges The site is within proximity of 10 ha of a nature conservation designation May be appropriate for development in the long term contributing to the housing needs of the district and supporting sustainable place-making, however there are substantial constraints to overcome. Is located such that it could be effectively masterplanned to become part of the existing place and community Would require strategic landscaping Would require careful integration to ensure continued use of current employment uses on the site boundary Would require noise, air and light mitigation Would require mitigation of transport impacts Would require sensitively masterplanned development to address topographical challenges 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA with the additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns over the how the existing infrastructure, especially Little Paxton Bridge will cope with the increased traffic flow. Real concerns regarding traffic joining the A1 junction south bound. This junction is not a slip road making it a dangerous junction for road users. 	<p>Object to the proposal.</p>
Southoe and Midloe 1			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Midloe Grange Farm, Midloe</p> <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Open Space:</p> <p>Biodiversity net gain</p>	<p>HDC assessment - combination the outcomes of the LAA and SA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 99% of the site is in flood zone 1, with the remainder in flood zone 3b and the proposed use would have a positive impact on flood risk It can contribute to increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change, through planting and habitat restoration It would contribute further to the development of ecological corridors connecting sites of importance that sit just outside the site boundary Public rights of way provide access to natural greenspace and leisure opportunities The site would have a positive impact on the surrounding landscape and ecology and the setting of Midloe Grange, a listed building May be appropriate for biodiversity net gain Construction environmental management plan, environmental DNA surveys, species surveys and baseline ecological conditions and an offsite management plan demonstrate facilitation of the site 	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA</p>	<p>Support – welcome the biodiversity net gain.</p>

Southoe and Midloe 2			
Address and Proposal	Comments	SNTC Working Group Comments:	Recommended SNTC Response
<p>Address: Southoe Garden Village, Southoe</p> <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Residential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Market and/or affordable housing• Custom and self-build housing <p>Commercial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment <p>Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary school• Secondary school• Neighbourhood hubs• District centre <p>Open Space Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural, green or open spaces• Biodiversity net gain opportunities• Land to safeguard against flooding	<p>HDC assessment - combination the outcomes of the LAA and SA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The site is greenfield with the majority being classified as grade 2 agricultural land and the rest being grade 1• The majority of the site is flood zone 1 with areas of flood zone 2 and 3a located in the south of the site attributed to the River Kym• The scale of the site would result in significant landscape impact arising from its topography• Could adversely impact designated nature conservation sites, Little Paxton Wood (a SSSI and ancient woodlands) ancient woodlands and county wildlife sites• Development would have fundamental impacts on Southoe completely transforming the scale, nature and character of the existing rural settlement and its resident community• Has potential to increase traffic and travel on and around the A1 with the potential to increase air pollution• The site is in an area of relatively high market demand for new homes• The site is currently remote from services, employment, primary education, shops and public transport, but could provide these as part of an holistic development• There is archaeological potential within the site• The site is inappropriate for development due to its likely significant impacts on the character of the landscape and on Southoe as well as designated nature conservation sites• The achievability of the development is unclear because of significant infrastructure requirements including new access(s) onto the A1, the presence of pipelines and overhead powerlines	<p>The Working Group members echo the comments stated in the HDC assessment - combination with the outcomes of the LAA and SA.</p>	<p>Object to the proposals.</p>

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Date:	29 th OCTOBER 2024
Title:	FULL COUNCIL PROJECT STATUS OVERVIEW
Contact Officer/s:	PROJECT DELIVERY MANAGER, ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT OFFICER

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide a summary for note of the status updates of key projects since the last meeting.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Council note the information provided.

3. Background

- 3.1 The purpose of the report is to provide a status update on key live projects with specific project milestones highlighted. It is acknowledged that there are a lot of other projects and activities which are covered by Council's committees which are not included in this document. These will continue to be reported through their relevant committees and action lists. All projects and activities which require a Full Council's attention are to be included in the table below and reported on next Full Council meetings together with updates that may have already been reported to committees.
- 3.2 As a result of work of the Council Strategy Working Group the full list of the Strategic Projects has been created, located within the timescales, budgets and priorities. Those proposals are currently under the review of the relevant Committees owing the projects.
Once each Committee discuss and agree on Strategic Projects Scopes the overall Strategic Programme and Budget will be presented to the Town Council.

4. Information

- 4.1 The table below provides a project summary of key live projects with actions or progress to note.

PROJECT	STATUS & COMMENTS	PROJECT MILESTONES	TIMEFRAME	BUDGET	SOURCE
CHANGING PLACES RIVERSIDE	COMPLETE	Start of construction works	14/04/2024	£103,817.00	Resolved to fund from CIL Reserve
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opened to public 18.10.2024 with some pressure from the members and taking over HDC for final sign off from MDUK 	SNTC to display advisory information on Changing Places and the improvements	Completed		
		Temporary toilets provision	Completed		
		Completion of construction works	Completed		
		Snagging	Completed		
		Sign-off incl. qualified body (charity)	Completed		
		Signage (additional info, directions)	Completed		
		Operational plan (emergency calls and visits)	Completed		
		Opening to public	18.10.2024		
MUSEUM ROOF REPAIRS AND REMEDIALS	ONGOING (ACTIVE WORKS)	Review of survey recommendations, site meetings and inspections by specialist contractor	Completed	£19,490.00	A) Museum building maintenance budget B) Earmarked reserve for Community Buildings
	Anticipated overall completion: 29/11/2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs 1 and 2 fully completed More damage discovered and additional works with the skylight Weather impact As result about 4 weeks delay 	Programme and Budget, Phasing	Completed		
		Appoint the contractor(s)	Completed		
		Start of works within the delegated budget (A)	02/09/2024		
		Completion of works within the delegated budget	Nov 2024		

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	Outcome: completely renewed and sound roof and building watertight from above which allows to proceed with other issues, remedials and further building development	Report/Approval of Operations and Amenities Committee on works outside of delegated budget	Completed		
		Report/Approval of Finance and Governance Committee on works outside of delegated budget	Completed		
		Report/Approval of Full Council on works outside of delegated budget (B)	Completed		
		Start of works outside delegated budget	08.10.2024		
		Completion of works outside delegated budget	Nov 2024		
		Snagging and Handover	Nov 2024		
ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE stneots-tc.gov.uk	ONGOING (PROJECT INITIATION)	Project Initiation (incl. requirements). Business Case	Ongoing	£4,000.00	Currently approved budget
	WIP <ul style="list-style-type: none">Project initiation ongoing: project team, stakeholders, users.Surveys in progress: completedBusiness Case in progressTechnical brief in progress based on the survey outcomes Current stage outcome: Technical Brief, Business Case and Full Project Initiation To be presented on next Operations and Amenities Committee in November 2024. Enabling for: Programme and Budget, Appointing contractor.	Technical Brief	Ongoing		
		Programme and Budget	Ongoing		
		Appointing contractor	Dec 2024		
		Design	Feb 2024		
		Coding	March 2024		
		Testing and de-bugging	April 2024		
		Launch	April 2024		
CHURCH WALL	ONGOING (ENABLING)	Report/Approval of Operations and Amenities Committee on Budget to Appoint SE	Completed	£2,000.00	Budget for Stage 1 – SE - General Reserve
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Structural survey completed	Report/Approval of Finance and Governance Committee on Budget to Appoint SE	Completed		

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(ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Communication with potential contractors and suppliers to formalise the budgetScope of the Project, Programme and Budget to be proposed to Ops & A Committee later this year	Report/Approval Full Council on Budget to Appoint SE	Completed		
		Structural Survey reviewed. Recommendations and Designs for wall rebuilt/remedials	Completed		
		Scope of Works, Programme and Budget	Ongoing	TBC	SOURCE TBC
		Report/Approval of Operations and Amenities Committee on Scope of Works, Programme and Budget	Jan 2025		
		Report/Approval of Finance and Governance Committee on Scope of Works, Programme and Budget	Jan 2025		
		Report/Approval of the Full Council on Scope of Works, Programme and Budget	Jan 2025		
		Necessary Approvals (Church, Planning, Highways and etc)	Apr 2025		
		Appoint the contractor	Apr 2025		
		On-site construction works started	May 2025		
		On-site construction works completed	Aug 2025		
		Snagging and Handover	Aug 2025		
JUBILEE GARDEN MOSAIC REPAIR AND REMEDIALS	ONGOING (ENABLING)	Mosaic inspection. Recommendation for remedials and repairs.	Completed	TBC	TBC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Further work on agreed list of proposals approved to finalise scope of works and budgetsUpdated proposals to be returned to CommitteeStill waiting/chasing for the quotes	Report/Approval of Operations and Amenities Committee on Budget and Scope of Works	Ongoing		
		Report/Approval of Finance and Governance Committee on Budget and Scope of Works	Oct 24		
		Report/Approval of the Full Council on Budget and Scope of Works	Oct 24		
		Repair/Construction on-site works started	TBC		
		Repair/Construction on-site works started	TBC		

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		Maintenance plan	TBC		
PRIORY CENTRE	ONGOING (ENABLING)	Designs	Ongoing		HDC funded project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated designs resubmitted to LPA Planning permission granted A lot of conditions re the finishing materials to be discharged before works over slab Tender completed BDG to be updated mid-November Target – contractor on site – Dec 2025 	Application for planning permission	Completed		SNTC option to invest up to £1.5M towards the energy solution SNTC investing additional £200K towards PC fit-out
		Planning permission. Granted	Completed		
		Tendering for contractors	Completed		
		Enabling works (demolition)	Dec 2024		
		Energy solution	TBC		
		Construction/Redevelopment of Priory Centre	From Jan 2025		
		Construction of the new North Extension	TBC		
		Decorations and fit-out of Priory Centre	TBC		
		Decorations and fit-out of the North Extension (incl. TC Offices)	TBC		
		Priory Centre snagging and handover	TBC		
		Priory Centre re-opening for public	TBC		
		Priory Centre normal operations	TBC		
		North Extension snagging and handover (incl. TC Offices)	TBC		
		North Extension opening for public	TBC		
		North Extension normal operations (incl. TC Offices)	TBC		

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SPLASH PARK	ONGOING (ENABLING)	Updated Business Plan	Completed	£650,000.00	CIL Reserve
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vesting declaration: agreed and just needs to be physically signed by two trustees, Ian and Mick have agreed to do so. Operating agreement and lease agreement: currently being worked on by the legal team Car park document: currently being worked on by the legal team with the lease agreement, but has been verbally agreed and agreed in writing informally Charity commission: the Charity Commission has taken the view that "building a Splash Park on the site would be incidental to the Trust property's current purposes" and so considers that the Splash Park can go ahead without a scheme being required. There is a letter from the Charity Commission explaining and confirming this. Town Clerk to circulate solicitor comments on conditions related to any funding. Updated business plan to be shared internally with Councillors following updates by the Trust as part of addressing previous queries raised. 	Legal agreements between Council and CIO incl. the funding release procedures	Ongoing		
		Required changes/confirmation from the Charity Commission	Completed		
		Funding released to CIO	TBC		
		Construction of the Splash Park	TBC		
		Utility connections	TBC		
		Required operational agreements	TBC		
		Snagging and Handover	TBC		
		Opening for public	TBC		

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SVDK access and car park	ONGOING	Solution	Completed	TBC Below £10K	Ops (Cemetery) Budget
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">H&S risk and issue because of mudReinstating hardcore surface for the road and car park (Granite MOT Type 1)	Quotes from contractors and suppliers	Ongoing		
		Works on road and car park	Nov-Dec 2024		
ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT OFFICER PROJECTS					
Energy audits of Council buildings	ONGOING (ACTIVE WORKS)	Agree that Carbon Neutral budget can be used for energy audits	Completed	£4,210	Carbon Neutral budget
	Anticipated overall completion: December 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Energise chosen as contractorKick off meeting completedAll required information given to EnergiseEnergise assessors now contacting keyholders to arrange assessment dates Outcome: to understand the impact of our buildings in terms of energy use and carbon footprint, in order to develop a plan for decarbonising our stock	Secure quotes from contractors and select an approved contractor to move the project forward	Completed		
		Appoint the contractor and hold kick-off meeting	Completed		
		Start of works within the delegated budget	Completed		
		Completion of works within the delegated budget	Dec 2024		
		Review reports at E&E Committee meeting to plan decarbonisation programme	14.01.25		
Flood awareness campaign	ONGOING (ACTIVE WORKS)	Agree to carry out a flood awareness campaign	Completed	Circa £1,240 (charge to get leaflets to Royal Mail TBC)	Flood Prevention budget
	Anticipated overall completion: November 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Leaflets currently being printedRoyal Mail delivery to be booked next week upon receipt of leaflets	Design and create leaflet	Completed		
		Select method of delivery	Completed		
		Place Royal Mail delivery order	Oct 2024		
		Completion of project within the delegated budget	Nov 2024		

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	Outcome: St Neots residents to receive a leaflet on flood prevention and what they can do to protect themselves and their homes				
Biodiversity Improvement at the Old Cemetery	ONGOING (ACTIVE WORKS)	Select site for ecological audit	Completed	£4,779.70	Biodiversity for All grant
	<div>Anticipated overall completion: Unknown – should be Nov 2024 but looks likely this will now be delayed</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Grant receivedSite meeting completed and order placed</div> <div>Outcome: improve the biodiversity of the old cemetery through a Biodiversity for All grant</div>	Review suitability of audit and apply for Biodiversity for All grant	Completed		
		Receive grant	Completed		
		Select contractors and meet on site	Completed		
		Contractors place order for all new trees, hedges, bulbs, etc.	Completed		
		SNTC identify issues with location	Completed		
		SNTC identify issues with permissions	Completed		
		Permissions being sought	23.10.24		
		Start of works within delegated budget	Maybe never		
		Completion of works outside delegated budget	Maybe never		
Emergency Plan	ONGOING (ACTIVE WORKS)	First draft of plan created by Town Clerk	Completed	£691.47 (approx. for toolkit)	Unsure
	<div>Anticipated overall completion: TBC</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan reviewed and updatedNeeds final updates and sign off</div> <div>Outcome: emergency plan created to inform officers and Councillors of what processes should be followed in the event of an emergency being declared in St Neots</div>	Review and updating of plan completed by EPO	Completed		
		Town Clerk to make final updates and sign off	TBC		
		Sign off by committee	TBC		
		Purchase of emergency equipment	TBC		

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As a result of the Council Strategy Working Group the full list of the Strategic Projects has been created, located within the timescales, budgets and priorities. Those proposals are under the review of the Committees with the relevant remit.

Once each Committee discuss and agree on Strategic Projects Scopes the overall Strategic Programme and Budget will be presented to the Town Council.

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

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

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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. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 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 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).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
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

26/10/2023 18/03/2024 04/06/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

SF Christopher for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Stephen Christopher

Date

04/06/2024

*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:

ST NEOTS 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	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:

25/6/24

and recorded as minute reference:

FC-062-24/25

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

Chair

Cllr Richard Slade

Clerk

Christopher Robson

www.stneots-tc.gov.uk

PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	3,244,389	3,861,594	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	1,864,357	1,949,524	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	728,495	1,784,726	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	994,024	1,099,465	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	26,799	26,115	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	954,824	1,229,770	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	3,861,594	5,240,494	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	3,908,412	5,319,056	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	4,575,018	4,819,831	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	247,500	232,500	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

Teodora Kostova

Date

04/06/2024

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

25/6/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

FC-063-24/25 REFERENCE

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

Cllr Richard Slade

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

In respect of **St Neots Town Council - CA0235**

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

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR 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.

Please see below

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

The smaller authority has submitted its AGAR and supporting documentation prior to 30 September 2024; however, we have not been able to complete our review work in time to enable the smaller authority to publish the required documentation in line with statutory requirements. Once we have completed our review a final report will be provided with the certificate of completion detailing any qualifications and 'other' matters.

Our fee note for the limited assurance review will be issued when we certify completion.

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

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 2024.


We do not certify completion because:

We have not been able to complete our review work in time to enable the smaller authority to publish the required documentation in line with statutory requirements.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

27/09/2024

Final External Auditor Report and Certificate 2023/24 in respect of St Neots Parish Council – CA0235

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.

External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2023/24

On 27 September 2024, we issued a report detailing the results of our limited assurance review of Sections 1 and 2 of this authority's Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2024. We explained that we were unable to certify completion of the review at that time. We are now in a position to certify completion of the review.

The external auditor report given in Section 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return requires amendments as follows:

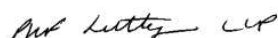
On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation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

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

None

External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.



PKF Littlejohn LLP

30/09/2024