

ALTON Town Council



Telephone (01420) 83986
www.alton.gov.uk
info@alton.gov.uk

Town Clerk: Pat Harris

Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

29th February 2024

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the **FULL COUNCIL** on **Wednesday 6th March 2024 at 7.00pm** at the Town Hall when the under mentioned business will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

Patricia M Harris

Pat Harris
Interim Town Clerk

To: All Town Councillors

Councillor Matthew Bayliss
Councillor John Chubb
Councillor Mark Boyce-Churn
Councillor Annette Eyre
Councillor Don Hammond
Councillor Graham Hill
Councillor Matthew Kellermann
Councillor Nick O'Brien
Councillor Barbara Tansey
Councillor Janice Treacher
Councillor Peter Wadman
Councillor Jonathan Waugh

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 6th MARCH 2024
TOWN HALL, ALTON – AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Town Mayor's announcements
3. Minutes of the Extra-ordinary Full Council meeting held on the 28th February 2024 for approval.
4. Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensations - Councillors are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. You must withdraw when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter
5. Questions to the Council. Members of the public are invited to make representations.
6. To agree the Council's response to Planning Applications 35940/003 and 35940/004 for conversion and change of use from offices to 5No. 1 and 2 bed apartments and remodelling of rear extension with terrace above and enclosed railings. External and internal refurbishment at 4 High Street, Alton, GU34 1BU
7. Landlords Consent: Chawton Park Indoor Bowls Club
8. Event Grant – Classic Car Show
9. Re-instatement of Meet the Councillor Sessions
10. Internal Audit Report
11. Accounts to 29th February 2024
12. To receive a report from and ask questions of the County Council and District Council representatives

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL – 6TH MARCH 2024**

ITEM 5 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

1. **Mr. David Pennington:** I write as a representative of residents in the vicinity of Lodge Farm, North Warnborough. The group is known as Villages Oppose Warehouses, or VOW. It is registered as a Community Interest Company and we have an active website. We exist with the specific purpose of stopping the proposed conversion of 80 acres of farmland into a massive warehouse distribution centre adjacent to Junction 5 on the M3

Hart DC rejected the PreApplication last year but the developers have announced their intention to submit an Outline Application sometime in February.

VOW would appreciate an opportunity to address the next meeting of your Council. Our intention would be to draw councillors' attention to the impact on the wider area of this massive development of 105,000 sqm of warehouse space – one of the largest warehouse sites in the UK with (according to the developers) estimated vehicle movements of over fourteen thousand per 24 hours, 7 days a week, principally HGVs.

We have a programme of addressing all local authorities in the catchment area of the development. An update received has been forwarded to all councillors for further information.

ITEM 6 TO AGREE ATC RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS 35940/003 AND 35940/004

Both applications refer to 4 High Street. They are for conversion and change of use from offices to 5No. 1 and 2 bed apartments and remodelling of rear extension with terrace above and enclosed railings. External and internal refurbishment.

Notification of Full Planning application number 35940/003

http://planningpublicaccess.easthants.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=_EHANT_DCAPR_255458

Notification of Listed Building Consent application number 35940/004

http://planningpublicaccess.easthants.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=_EHANT_DCAPR_255459

ITEM 7 LANDLORDS CONSENT: CHAWTON PARK INDOORS BOWLS CLUB

The Indoor Bowls Club at Chawton Park Road have received an approach for South-East Water to be able to use an area within the car park area of the site for the purpose of establishing a compounds area for storage, welfare and facilities whilst works are carried out over a two month period from 22nd April. Full details and a plan showing the area to be used are included in Members bundles. The Bowls Club have negotiated a remuneration in the sum of £3,000 for this use.

Members will be aware that the Indoor Bowls Club are tenants of Alton Town Council and pay an annual rent for the facility of £4950 per quarter.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to grant Landlords approval to Chawton Park Indoors Bowls Club to enter into a Licence with South East Water for the purpose of providing space within their car park area for a works compound for a period of 2 months from 22nd April 2024 for a fee of £3,000.

ITEM 8 EVENT GRANT: CLASSIC CAR SHOW

FOR DECISION

The Classic Car Show is one of the most establish and very well supported third-party charity fund raising event held in the Town Centre which is now organised by The Lions Club of Alton each year.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve an Event Grant for the Classic Car Show in the sum of £500 (five hundred pounds)

ITEM 9 REINSTATEMENT OF MEET THE COUNCILLOR SESSIONS

Councillors previously agreed at the September Full Council meeting that they would host additional “Meet the Councillor” sessions in 2024 at a central location, six times a year, on a Tuesday or Saturday morning with a venue to be confirmed (Minute ref 30.2 refers).

Members are requested to consider the reinstatement of these sessions with effect from March with suggested timings either on a Tuesday or Saturdays from 10.00 to 12.00 noon and utilising either the middle unit below the Town Hall as a venue or alternatively to use the Town Hall itself but this would require officer presence. It had been suggested previously that councillors would agree the rota and that these sessions would be held on a bi-monthly basis. Members may also like to consider whether they wish to alternate a Tuesdays and Saturdays to provide options for residents. As before, officers recommend that two councillors must be present at each session.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to agree the reinstatement of Meet the Councillor sessions 6 times a year to be held either in the middle unit below the Town Hall or in the Town Hall itself with a rota being agreed by Councillors requiring 2 councillors to be in attendance at each session.

ITEM 10 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

FOR DECISION

Members are requested to review the Internal Auditors Report from Mulberry & Co. dated 6th February which is included in Members bundles for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested approve the non-financial risk assessment as tabled.

ITEM 11 ACCOUNTS to 29th FEBRUARY 2024

FOR DECISION

If there are any questions arising, please submit these to the Clerk in advance of Full Council to ensure answers are available at the meeting.

Balance Sheet as at 29th February 2024 for sign off by the Chairman of the Council and the RFO (Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs Pat Harris – Interim Town Clerk).

Income & Expenditure

Attached is the Income and Expenditure Report - this illustrates the Operating Income and Expenditure for the council to 29th February 2024 against the budget set by the Council.

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 29th February 2024

The Bank Reconciliation Statements are as presented with a closing balance of £342,426.29 (Unity), £1,463,829.73 (CCLA) and £396.17 (Petty cash). This requires signing off on behalf of the council that the figures presented reconcile with the original bank statement which will be given to the Chairman on the night.

Payments over £500

The attached report includes all payments over £500, issued between 1st – 29th February 2024 in respect of invoices and grant cheques.

There have been no new Direct Debits added to the bank account since the variable direct debits list was approved by Full Council in November 2023.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to confirm their approval of:

1. The balance sheet dated 29th February 2024
2. The Income and Expenditure account to 29th February 2024
3. The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account and the CCLA Deposit Account
4. The Payments over £500 covering 1st -29th February 2024

**ITEM 12 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM AND ASK QUESTIONS OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL
AND DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES FOR NOTING**

Enclosed is a written report from EHDC Councillor Emily Young which is submitted for information.

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2024 AT 7.00PM AT THE TOWN HALL**

Present: **Councillor** **Annette Eyre (Deputy-Mayor)**
 Don Hammond
 Graham Hill
 Matthew Kellermann
 Mark Boyce-Churn
 Nick O'Brien
 Janice Treacher
 Peter Wadman

In attendance: **Pat Harris** - **Town Clerk**
 Hayley Carter - **Deputy Clerk**
 25 Members of the public

93 To Elect a Town Mayor for the Period from 1st March to 29th May 2024

Deputy Mayor, Annette Eyre, welcomed all members of the public who were attending the meeting and asked for nominations for the position of Town Mayor.

Councillor Kellermann made a personal statement about the outgoing Mayor and proposed the following amendment:

“That in order to restore public confidence and a sense of propriety, the candidates who lost the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral vote of May 17th 2023 are elected unopposed, or at the very least given first refusal of said roles, for the period of March 1st - 29th May 2024”

There was no seconder, therefore the amendment was not carried.

The Town Clerk read out a message from Councillor Bayliss, which he had sent by email ahead of the meeting:

“I just wanted to record my (non-voting) support for Annette taking over as Town Mayor. This would obviously be a few months earlier than would ordinarily be expected, but Annette has my full support”.

On the proposal of Councillor Hammond, seconded by Councillor Hill, Councillor Eyre was nominated and consented to the nomination.

On the proposal of Cllr Kellermann, seconded by Councillor Boyce-Churn, Councillor Bayliss was nominated. He was not present to accept the nomination.

Taken in alphabetical order Councillor Eyre received 7 votes and Councillor Bayliss 1 vote, thus it was

RESOLVED

Councillor Eyre be elected Town Mayor for the period from 1st March to 29th May 2024.

All in favour.

94 **To receive the Town Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

Councillor Annette Eyre read out and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

95 **To Elect a Deputy Town Mayor for the period from 1st March to 29th May 2024**

On the proposal of Councillor Kellermann, seconded by Councillor Eyre, it was

RESOLVED

Councillor Hill be elected as Deputy Town Mayor

All in favour.

96 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Matthew Bayliss, Barbara Tansey, Jonathan Waugh and John Chubb

97 **Deputy Town Mayor's Announcements**

The Deputy Mayor then made the following announcements:

- (i) The Mayor has resigned in the light of the fact that he is being investigated by the police; not because he has been found guilty. Whilst these investigations are ongoing, the Council will not be commenting any further on this matter at this time.
- (ii) The next scheduled Full Council meeting is on Wednesday, 6th March here at the Town Hall.
- (iii) The Annual Electors meeting will be taking place on Wednesday, 13th March and will be held at the Assembly Rooms with a 7.00 p.m. start. Light refreshments will be served from 6.30 p.m. The Agenda will be on published this Friday, 1st March

98 **Minutes of the last meetings held on 10th January 2024**

On the proposal of Councillor Graham Hill, seconded by Councillor O'Brien, it was

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 7th February 2024

All in favour

99 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

Councillor Graham Hill declared "I have sought the views of the Deputy Monitoring Officer at EHDC and I wish to make the following two declarations of interest:

1. For the Draft Local Plan, item 9, I declare a non-pecuniary interest in that I am also a District Councillor at EHDC, which is the decision-making body for the Draft Local Plan. However, this declaration does not stop me from voting on, or participating in the discussion on, this item.
2. For the Neighbourhood Plan, item 10, I also declare a non-pecuniary interest in that I am the nominated Town Councillor member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering

Group. This group has already made recommendations to the Town Council. To avoid any possible conflict of interest I therefore will not be participating in the discussion and will be abstaining on this item.”

100 **Questions to the Council**

100.1 17 pieces of correspondence which had been received after publication of the papers, but before the meeting, had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting and were noted. These can be found in Appendix A.

100.2 Stephen Gough stated that he was speaking as a concerned Altonian who has lived in the town for around 50 years. He is concerned about the over-development of Alton with no extra infrastructure in place. He is very concerned about what is proposed for Neatham Down and said that with Alton being the only town placed in Tier 1 in the Local Plan it was like Alton was being made a dumping ground for development from EHDC, who are quite happily residing within the South Downs National park (SDNP). He questioned the need for so many new homes, stating that there were still lots unsold on the new CALA site.

100.3 Mark Weldon from Binsted spoke next, saying that ALT 8, Neatham Manor proposal is not in Alton but will affect the town. It is highly fertile agricultural land that they propose to build 1250 new homes on with one single access to the site, which is ludicrous. The site would be vehicle dependent as it is not practical at all to walk or cycle from there into Alton. According to his calculation this settlement will create a further 1500 vehicle movements around the Holybourne roundabout on the A31.

If you cover all that beautiful land with concrete the rain will not penetrate the aquifer and come out filtered; it will run directly off the land into the River Wey, causing pollution and flooding further down the river.

100.4 Cathie Weldon added that the whole area will be dependent on the same infrastructure – doctors, dentist, schools, etc. There is absolutely no way that can cope with more building. It is absurd and we need to stop it now.

100.5 Dr June Chatfield spoke about water and sewage flooding – her full statement had been sent in prior to the meeting and can be found in the list of correspondence at Appendix A.

100.6 Toby Winn announced that they have set up saveneathamdown.org and he had brought flyers for anyone who wanted to take one.

100.7 James Willis said that he has lived here for many years and was a GP here. He knows how much work the council have done on this and that they are not often thanked. He said the town owes the councillors a massive debt of gratitude for everything they do.

100.8 Abigail Hils spoke about the big focus on Neatham Down and how the proposed development would impact on the dark night skies. Her and her daughter (who was also present) feel very strongly about that as it is the perfect area from which to observe the night sky. They also feel very strongly about the loss of biodiversity in

these big developments. We would lose so much if Neatham Down were to go ahead. Lots of animals would lose their habitats.

On a positive note, the support from this small community has been immense and Abigail would like to thank Alton for that.

100.9 Gary Mills had registered to speak but said everything he had wanted to say had already been said.

100.10 Andrew Joy stated that he has come wearing a suit and tie tonight because he wants to pay respect to the institution that is the Town Council. He has been a resident for 50 years and recognises that there is fantastic expertise in this room and elsewhere in the town. What we are now having to make decisions on has been crudely imposed on Alton and means a small percentage of the district having to absorb the lions share of development. It is grossly out of proportion and also outside of Alton's boundary – the problem there being that Alton will not get the support for improved infrastructure. Any support resulting from the development at Neatham Down would remain inside that development.

The fundamental issue is with the Local Plan and this has been well articulated by the people speaking this evening.

Andrew went on to say that huge credit and immense respect needs to go to everyone involved with the Neighbourhood Plan. People need to be respectful of the quality of work that has been done but understand that there is no point coming up with site allocations until the problems with the Local Plan are resolved.

101 **Response to Local Plan**

Councillor Kellermann proposed an amendment, that a 'Statement of Principle' should be made that "Alton Town Council objects to any further development of green fields (in and around the Parish) to meet the quotas handed down by EHDC." Councillor Hill seconded the amendment and thus it was

RESOLVED

To amend the resolution to make a Statement of Principle that Alton Town Council objects to any further development of green fields (in and around the Parish) to meet the quotas handed down by EHDC, in addition to approving ATC's response to the EHDC Local Plan Regulation 18 (2024) as tabled

On the proposal of Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Hammond, it was

RESOLVED to

- i) approve ATC's response to the EHDC Local Plan Regulation 18 (2024) as tabled (see Appendix B)**
- ii) to make a Statement of Principle that Alton Town Council objects to any further development of green fields (in and around the Parish) to meet the quotas handed down by EHDC.**

All in favour

102 **Alton Neighbourhood Plan**

The Deputy Mayor thanked all the volunteers on the ANPSG and said she recognised the immense amount of work that has been done and how they always put their heart and soul into it.

Councillor Hill reminded the meeting about his declaration but indicated he would remain in the room as his interest is non-pecuniary.

Following indications from councillors that they wanted to defer the approval of the removal of site allocations from the Neighbourhood Plan until they heard back about the response to the Local Plan, the Town Clerk reminded everyone that EHDC do not respond to individual comments or submissions on the Local Plan and there would be no feedback on the outcome of the Reg 18 consultation until at least July.

Councillor O'Brien then proposed an amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Hammond, and thus it was

RESOLVED

to amend the resolution in order that approval of the removal of site allocations from the draft Neighbourhood Plan could be deferred until such time as a meeting has been organised with the Steering Group to provide more information.

All in favour

On the proposal of Councillor O'Brien, seconded by Councillor Hammond, it was

RESOLVED

to defer approval of the removal of site allocations from the draft Neighbourhood Plan until such time as a meeting has been organised with the Steering Group to provide more information.

All in favour

103 **Planning Application – Palace Cinema**

On the proposal of Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Kellermann, it was

RESOLVED to submit a response of No Objection to the application 32440/008 for the building previously used as a two-screen cinema to be converted and extended into 6 Flats (Class C3)

All in favour

104 **Landlord's Consent: Alton Assembly Rooms**

104.1 On the proposal of Councillor Hammond, seconded by Councillor Eyre, it was

RESOLVED to grant Landlord's Consent to Dementia Friendly Alton to install a stairlift at the Assembly Rooms

All in favour.

The meeting closed at 8.18pm

APPENDIX A

AGENDA ITEM 8 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM RESIDENTS

1. Jerry Janes – Chairman of Holybourne Village Association: Agenda Item 10

Dear Councillor

I write with respect to the decision taken by the Alton Neighbourhood Plan steering group not to recommend any sites for development within the Alton area.

This decision has the effect of removing the benefit of local knowledge and experience from those members of that group and handing the decision making back to officers and Members at EHCD. It is the opposite of taking back control that composing our own Neighbourhood Plan had offered.

Already Alton has been hit unfairly with a huge and totally unfair dwelling building total of 1700 which understandably, has caused consternation across the town. This decision by the ANP steering group has weakened the ability of the townsfolk to influence where development should take place and saying this, I do recognise the enormous pressure the group has been put under by those seeking to influence their choices. I Chair one such group but felt at ease arguing our case with other Altonians who I know, understood our situation and environment. I feel no confidence at all that we will be treated with similar understanding by those based at EHDC.

Can I ask the Town Council to delay making a decision for two weeks on this issue and to take advice from their own constituents to determine what local feelings are on this issue?

I'd be enormously grateful if Members could consider this request carefully.

With best wishes and grateful thanks

Jerry Janes – Chairman Holybourne Village Association.

2. Mr. Raj jeyasingam – previously circulated to all Councillor: Agenda Item 11

Dear members

I noticed that the Palace Cinema application is in your agenda for the meeting to be held on 28th February, hopefully to make it easier for you, as you have busy schedules, I can confirm all the matters mentioned by the previous planning officer in her refusal for my planning application, have been rectified.

I have noticed that in your previous comments, you were a bit concerned about the bin storage and would like a fire officer to be consulted. I can confirm, as I have done during the site visit by Councillor Eyre, the new bin storage will be incorporated inside the existing cinema, thus leaving a clear path. The alley to the side of the cinema building belongs to me and will be kept clear at all times for the benefit of the new development.

Any privacy issue has been dealt with by relocating the windows and fitting obscured glass where necessary.

As it is an internal conversion, I foresee no building supplies being delivered via the service road to the rear of the building. Any builders working on the site will be parking their vehicles in Alton House Hotel, where I will be paying their parking fees, as and when required.

It has been exactly one year since the original application was submitted, lets hope this application will be dealt with within the specified time limit.

You have previously made me aware you have limited powers as a consultee, but I would appreciate your support in this matter.

Kind regards
Raj

3. Carol Outlaw – Holybourne Resident: Agenda Item 10

To the Town Clerk,

Please be kind enough to forward this email to each member of the Alton Town Council before the extraordinary meeting this Wednesday, the 28th Feb 2024. Many thanks in anticipation.

Dear Alton Town Council Member,

I write to register my concern at recent developments regarding the Draft Local Plan and the numbers of homes being allocated to Alton within it and the possible site allocations in Alton. My main concerns are for Holybourne as this is where I live but also Alton as a whole.

I believe the overall figure of 1700 homes (potentially upwards of 5000 people) between now and 2040, is far too high for a town with a current population of approx 18,000. I am particularly against the proposed site at Neatham Down (and the possibility of 100-200 houses in Holybourne). Both of these would be on greenfield sites which should be a last resort once all brownfield sites have been exhausted. As I understand it no brownfield sites have been considered thus far.

Holybourne (up to 223 homes)

Any development of this size is an absolute no no, not only because of the green implication but also the problem of traffic in the village. It is already difficult to navigate through the village especially at busy times. Adding another potential 200 or more households to this would be unthinkable. This is in addition to the loss of countryside and flood risks. I'm sure others will have written to you about this already.

Neatham Down (1200 homes!)

This is prime greenfield land, the other side of the A31 to the town of Alton with all the implications that go with that; traffic, lack of services, accessibility to the town, environmental impact etc, loss of beautiful, wildlife sustaining countryside, all of which I know you are perfectly well aware of.

There has already been extensive development on greenfield land on the outskirts of Alton with more to come following recent planning permissions.

I understand that it is your intention to hand responsibility of numbers and site allocations back to EHDC which absolutely amazes me! You are obviously aware of the issues mentioned above as well as others, so how does passing the buck back to EHDC help, knowing very well that it is highly likely to ignore them and override any objections local residents have?

As I understand it the whole process is flawed and that local opinion and ideas have been ignored thus far. I also understand that a decision does not have to be made until 2026 anyway, following an extension to the previous deadline.

I am asking you, please, to postpone a decision at the meeting due to be held this coming Wednesday and to really listen to the feelings and objections of the residents of Alton (who elected you) and the reasons for them, and to work together with us to get the best possible outcome for all of us.

I know this whole subject is complex and does not only involve Alton and is obviously a political football but at the end of the day, your main responsibility is to the residents of the town of Alton, please do the right thing and take it seriously.

I would appreciate a response to my concerns from you and look forward to hearing from you.
Yours seriously

4. Dr. June Chatfield: Copy of representation sent in response to the Local Plan Reg 18 Part II Consultation: Agenda Item 9

Comments to Alton Town Council 28th February 2024

From Dr June Chatfield

As an environmental scientist I consider that there is lack of evidence and factual basis at the beginning of the Local Plan.

Overarching omissions are:

1. Insufficient knowledge and understanding of the local geology and topography that impose considerable constraints on building including financial viability because of infrastructure like pile driving. The Lower or Grey Chalk strata (viz: West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation and Zigzag Chalk Formation) have a high clay content unlike the more solid pure White Middle and Upper Chalk strata. Alton is unusual in the abundance of the Grey Chalk and developers equate chalk with good drainage – true for White Chalk, not so for Grey Chalk. The West Melbury Marly Chalk is the aquiclude that holds up the chalk aquifer that provides our chalk sourced water supply from Lasham. Where it outcrops at the surface springs arise. The Local Plan does note springs along the whole of the northern Wey.
- The Zigzag Chalk has various strata from marl to thin limestone bands and its clay content coupled with freeze-thaw action from around the ends of Ice Ages makes it heavily jointed and unstable as building land. There are cases of existing developments at King's View, Quarry Heights and another site in Wilsom Road under construction where there has been massive removal of chalk leaving a vertical cliff at the edge of the cutting which at King's View has failed more than once in the last 20 years. The latter came on the back of Highways not objecting to the access road provided it achieved a 1:10 minimum slope and this necessitated further excavation of the house plots. Both Neatham Down and Windmill Hill lower slopes would meet the same problems. Sometimes the best way to avoid problems is to be more aware of the limitations of the rock type and topography. Putting them into conditions on planning application is too late as money will have been spent on the application.
2. Insufficient knowledge of local hydrology a consequence of geology. The Wilsom Road industrial site allocation has spring seepages and the Caker Stream flows through it. The hollow in the field to the South of Omega Park was dug out by the Environment Agency as flood protection from ground water and surface run-off. The land has limited capacity for industrial use.
 3. The chalk aquifer has so far been Alton's reliable water supply but it is depleting and Wey Springs Pumping Station in New Odiham Road was closed in 2003 as unsustainable so we depend on water from Lasham. A reliable water supply from its springs was the reason for settlement in Alton.
 4. With a proposed 3,000 extra inhabitants who feed and expel daily that is a considerable overload on the Alton Sewage Treatment Works that also has load from new developments in Four Marks and Medstead. There are many incidents of legal discharge consent of raw sewage entering the northern Wey, an internationally important chalk stream and native trout fishery. In my 45 years in this area doing field work in the Wey I have evidence of a decline in the mollusc and shrimp populations which I attribute to sewage pollution. The Wey Valley Catchment Partnership's first vision statement to improve the Wey to good ecological status in line with the EU Water Framework Directive (good law that we need to keep intact in our post-Brexit legislation) concluded that this could not be done without massive Government funding on Sewage Treatment Works. This is a serious limiting factor to development not mentioned in the Local Plan.
 5. No understanding or mention of the history of Alton from a population of around 2,000 in 1800 to the present circa 20,000. Settlement started on river terrace gravel (e.g. St Lawrence church) and Normandy Street and the High Street are on this or Head deposit which drains well. All the best building land has been taken. The new Coors development is on West Melbury Marly Chalk so drainage will be an issue.

- 6 The tick box approach is not all inclusive and lack of information affects deliverability.
- 7 Natural limiting factors to growth and development, carrying capacity, of Alton. The suitable land for development has already been taken up. Any building on the periphery brings a car-dependent community. Are the existing new builds selling? A friend who regularly looks at the Alton property market online suggests not. Quite a few of the buyers come from higher priced areas in Surrey and London and come to Alton for lower cost housing. One comment I have had is the miniscule size of new build gardens. Space needs to be allocated for trees on development sites which is difficult to do in high densities as tree roots need more than a canopy spread and tree roots and drains are not good close together. Trees are needed for shade and heat control in the warmer summers to come as outlined in early sections of the Local Plan.
- 8 In reality Alton is full.

5. Juliet MacColl: Agenda Item 9/10

Dear Alton Town Councillors

A development is being proposed in Holybourne on the site of a natural spring. The field acts as a flood plain as does the field behind the playground. These fields are the areas where water from the springs and run off from Holybourne Down drain. The water will be displaced by any new developments and existing housing will be at risk. There was significant flooding in Holybourne in 2014 and this will only get worse if these fields are lost to development. Surface flooding is expected to be a growing issue and is obviously exacerbated by new developments. The risk will be more acute as climate change brings wetter weather and more intense storms.

I am asking the Town Councillors to make sound environmental decisions and to build on brownfield sites. There has to come a time when the EHDC stops dumping all the housing needs on Alton and the surrounds. Please stand up for the population you have been elected to represent. Bordon have had enough, why can't we have STRONG representation and say enough is enough. Aren't our green fields worth saving?

If every village in EHD built between 10 and 25 affordable homes, the need for these sprawling suburban developments would diminish. Villages would thrive and communities would be enhanced. Our town would then not become another Basingstoke, voted recently as in the top 20 worst towns in the UK.

Let's have a more creative response to our housing needs and allow the existing residents to continue enjoy living here.

How many of the houses and flats on the site of the brewery remain unsold? Where is the need for these huge numbers of new houses? Why aren't empty shops being converted into residential dwellings?

Yours sincerely
Juliet MacColl

6. Simon Millard: Agenda Item 10

Dear Town Councillor

After reading the recent minutes for ATC meeting this coming week, I would advocate that Alton Town Councillors delay responding to the ANPSG recommendation to not allocate until they have fully analysed the available options, including partial allocation of brownfield sites and taken input from Altonians. The decision from ANPSG was not a majority decision and is not evidenced by public opinion who are not aware of its implications.

This could be done within a matter of weeks and avoid a decision which has adverse implications for centuries.

Yours faithfully
Simon Millard

7. Richard Kelly: Agenda Item 10

Dear Alton Town Councillors

This message is related to the item on your forthcoming meeting on Wednesday 28th February relating to the proposal to remove site allocations from the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

For your information, I am a resident of Holybourne and have lived in the village for just about 30 years.

I strongly object to this proposal on several grounds

My principal objection is that the allocation of housing is fundamental to the validity of the Neighbourhood Plan (ANP). If the Council accepts the recommendation of their appointed Steering Group (ANLSG) then it seems to me you are abdicating all responsibility and accountability for the development of housing in Alton. You are in effect saying that we don't have

- a) the tenacity to find out what our residents want and
- b) the courage and will to stand up and fight for the interests of our town's citizens.

We are all fully aware that Alton and its surrounding villages does not have the infrastructure to accommodate the number of dwellings which EHDC are keen to foist on us. I recognise that Neatham Down is technically outside of Alton and its Plan area but that is pure technicality. EHDC in their own plan use words which clearly indicate they see Neatham Down as a part of Alton and residents who would use Alton facilities as their principal hub.

So to propose adding the number of houses outlined in the plan without suitable and appropriate infrastructure is tantamount to dereliction of duty. If EHDC really are serious about something the size of Neatham Down, then they should build this not from the ground up but from 2 metres down - starting with sewage, power, communications etc all in place before a single road or housing brick is laid. We all know of the failure of promises to do the infrastructure afterwards - so if we want to do it then do it properly.

As I understand it, national policy is to utilise brown field sites rather than green field ones which damage the beauty of the countryside we have. I know the South Downs National Park (SDNP) is protected but simply because Neatham Down and Alton are marginally outside the SDNP boundary does not make them any less beautiful. Where are the results of research which shows how brownfield sites have been considered and discarded? Has there been such research?

Ultimately, it may be that greenfield sites will be needed. But that, surely, can only be considered if any when full research into all other options are exhausted. I see no evidence of that. And if we have to go greenfield then have developers put their money where their mouth is and get the infrastructure in place first. If a 'Neatham Down' type and size of settlement is needed, then create it in an open area with its own infrastructure which does not hurt and impinge on existing settlements.

To reiterate the key point of this message: if councillors vote for this proposal then I feel they are betraying the people of Alton by not keeping key decision making under local control. I would strongly urge you to consider the interests of your population (your constituents let's not forget) and reject this proposal.

Yours sincerely

Richard Kelly

8. Liz Day: Agenda Item 10

To All Alton Town Councillors

After reading the recent minutes for ATC meeting this coming week, I would advocate that Alton Town Councillors delay responding to the ANPSG recommendation not to allocate until they have fully analysed the available options, including partial allocation of brownfield sites and taken input from Altonians. The decision from ANPSG was not a majority decision and is not evidence by public opinion who are not aware of the implications.

It is incredibly concerning to learn that allowing the decision on planning for hundreds of houses on greenfield sites within our villages with their own unique identity, could soon be taken by EHDC, whereby there is limited knowledge or connection to the local Areas of Alton and Holybourne. Holybourne has seen much housing development over the recent years and is not able to sustain further housing estates; you will already be aware of the strength of opposition from Holybourne residents and all the points raised here why development here is not safe or sustainable.

But we must stop destroying our greenfield sites and I urge you please to all push back on the housing allocations that Alton/Holybourne are required to take. Every brownfield site must be considered first before you destroy our beautiful countryside and communities. EHDC must look at a fairer allocation of housing for Alton and require other towns/areas to take a fairer share.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully
Liz Day
Holybourne Resident

9. Jessica Smith: Agenda Item 10

Dear Councillors and Town Clerk,

In advance of tomorrow's council meeting, I wanted to put across my plea for re-consideration of the response to the local plan. My husband and I are very concerned that asking for site allocations to be removed from the neighbourhood plan could make the situation worse for future development, allowing for developers to have a free for all in putting up sites for planning permission with decisions being made by EDHC, and no neighbourhood plan in place to give weight over where development cannot be built.

We urge that the neighbourhood plan should be delayed until the housing numbers have been challenged and resolved. Pushing through a neighbour plan with no site allocations could cause even more adverse development in our green fields. I understand that the Government have extended the duration of the Neighbourhood Plans, meaning that our NP will now not expire until November 2026. This gives time to challenge the housing allocation figures with EDHC and once the issues are resolved and figures confirmed, then the NP can be processed.

EDHC need to be challenged over their preference of green sites development over existing brownfield availability (circa 2,000 houses potential) which goes against the Government priorities. They also need to be challenged on the massively unfair and uneven distribution of housing numbers throughout the district, including the 20% buffer figure for Alton. All these questions are raised in your draft response, but we urge that the allocations are not given back to EDHC leaving Alton in a more vulnerable position.

We plan to submit our responses to the Local Plan this week.

I would be grateful if the Town Clerk could forward my email to all Alton Councillors today in advance of the meeting scheduled for tomorrow.

With many thanks,

Jessica Smith

10. Lucy Loosemore: Agenda Item 10

Once again Alton is being used as the EHDC dumping ground for newbuilds.

This fabulous, once little, town, with its close community, has already been subjected to a number of dubious new-builds. The jarring 'lego houses' set on the rolling green of Will hall Farm. The monstrosity of ugly flats on the old brewery site (nothing like the idyllic images we were shown). The estates at the top of Anstey Lane, built on what was supposed to be protected land (at least one of these houses cannot be lived in due to the shoddy building work).

All of this extra building has been done with very little concern for infrastructure, unless you count the ridiculously expensive (due to poor planning) traffic lights at the bottom of Anstey lane, which fixed a non-existent problem! The issues was, and still is and is getting worse due to the multitude of traffic lights at the Eggars end of the road. Several million on the Anstey Lane traffic lights could have been resolved with a small roundabout (your welcome).

Back to the main point. Why is Alton being used, once again, to dump an excess of new builds? I am unable to find any reason within the county council proposal for this blatant shifting from other available sites. Why such an attempt to get this in under the radar if everything was so above board and fair?

Is there a need to look closer at who owns proposed land, where councillors reside in relation to other potential sites, further investigation may need to be done with regard to conflict of interest. There have been alleged conflicts of interest with regard to previous developments, these things cannot remain unchallenged.

I understand the council has to hit a new build quota (my complex argument here goes further up the political chain). However, the clear and concise objections laid out by ATC, would lead me to believe that EHDC has conducted poor and bias investigations to come up with such a proposal, once again putting Alton in the worst possible situation. My main question is Why? Who benefits from this, it is certainly not the residents of Alton. Or is it just laziness on EHDC's part?

I look forward to greater explanation from EHDC, on how they came up with such a proposal and subsequent significant alteration to said proposal.

Kind regards
Lucy Loosemore

Correspondence received after publication of Agenda Item 8 Correspondence on Tuesday, 27th February

11. Debbie Whitehead

FAO all Alton Town Councillors with respect to the agenda item on the draft local plan at Wednesday's Town Council meeting.

I would be very grateful if the clerk could pass this message on to all councillors.

I would like to express my concern that Alton Town Council will pass the matter of the allocation of housing back to EHDC. This would imply that the residents of Alton are not interested in defining the parameters of what is acceptable to progress the development of the town, which is patently unjust and untrue – evidenced by recent turnout at public consultations for instance. Passing responsibility to EHDC denies the local voters a genuine voice in the developments affecting them, and also lends itself to those who do not have an interest, or indeed have other competing interests, having a more significant impact.

By way of example, the current housing allocation put Alton and Holybourne in Tier 1 whereas other towns in the locality, such as Whitehill and Bordon have been moved to Tier 2. This means that Alton will take the brunt of all new housing and is inherently unfair. EHDC has councillors representing these districts too and I need my local councillors to listen to my voice and fight for my community.

Please do NOT pass the matter of housing allocation to EHDC.

Thank you for your attention and the work that you do to support the residents of Alton,

Regards

Debbie Whitehead

12. Jeroen Hodges

Afternoon Pat / Graham / Don (and Alton Town Councillors)

I am reaching out to express my concerns about the EHDC Local Plan and current status of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan. I write that as a resident of Holybourne and indeed more broadly Alton its surrounding areas ([REDACTED]). I appreciate the commitment and effort that you and the Town Council invest to make Alton and its surrounds an area to be proud of!

I am conscious that feedback is required on the broader Local Plan and the current status / decision-making around the Alton Neighbourhood Plan – feedback is on many levels and all inter-related. I shall also feedback on the EHDC Local Plan site.

My feedback is based on attendance at ANP and EHDC consultation events – I feel very well briefed and indeed consider myself particularly engaged – these plans frankly pose an existential threat to our lovely part of East Hampshire. Of particular note I wish to raise:

- Overall allocation of 1700 homes – whilst I respect the need to provide housing for the UK population, I find it amazing that this number, allocated a number of years ago, is so high. It is the root cause of all the challenges we face, driving community to fight against community and avoid mass over-development. Calculated as an input to the 2020 allocations process, so much has changed:
 - o Covid - Working from Home - Movement from a Low Interest environment - Lack of demand for existing housing such as Brewery Fields (where take up has been low) ... indeed this figure actually includes 20+% contingency so we are actually aiming to over-deliver!
 - o I have very little confidence that this starting point is now correct

- Protection of specific “Tier 2” areas from development, thereby concentrating much development around Alton “Tier 1” area. Either formally or through ‘under the table deals’ it is clear that EHDC allocation is not being fairly shared across the area:
- o Bordon – has a political block who hold the balance of power – their prime objective is no more / limited further development of Bordon
- o Petersfield – a town similar to Alton but in the SDNP. However, Petersfield’s location in a natural bowl means sensible targeted development could be delivered without significant impact to the SDNP (at least far less impact than the Neatham Downs site)
- o Alton – appears to have been singled out for what can only be described as harsh over-development. It feels Alton and its surrounds doesn’t have the same level of “political protection”. It is unfair to expect to allocate the vast majority of housing to Alton and its surrounds. I believe that Alton and its surrounds deserves a ‘movement’ ... have raised this with Alton Herald journalist – let’s create public profile and opportunity to feedback
- Process to identify large areas including belatedly Neatham Down. It seems a poorly designed process is being followed where multiple large sites (Chawton Park Farm, Northbrook, ...) have been discounted and at the last minute the 3rd / 4th best option is being railroaded through. All options should have comparative SWOT analysis executed to ensure a fair / transparent process is followed. I will be feeding back on the Local Plan the issues with Neatham Down site – I wouldn’t be surprised if similar to the other sites. Currently it feels as if like “musical chairs” the music has stopped and Neatham is left standing and now targeted for massive over-development with 1250 houses to solve the challenge of delivery of a large allocation
 - o Provision of infrastructure. Clearly there are very plans / considerations of required infrastructure.
 - o Greenfield not brownfield. Government policy is clearly oriented towards brownfield over greenfield sites ... the consideration of sites like Neatham and Holybourne clearly contradict this – until at least there is demonstrable consideration of brownfield sites, including the ex-army sites across Bordon. There are a range of other sites that warrant equal consideration
- I have heard that “South Alton” now includes Holybourne and Neatham. These villages in rural settings do not deserve to be urbanised as part of the spread of Alton. At the Local Plan consultation in the Maltings I heard several times reference to South Alton – treating these villages as suburbs of Alton. There should remain a buffer zone and delineation of these villages
- Approach and timing of plans misaligned. It is crucial that the EHDC and ANP plans are aligned – it feels that they are being created in isolation.
- Neatham Down feedback. Will provide this to the Local Plan consultation process
- Alton / ANP should NOT lose control of allocation process. I have noticed in the agenda of the 28th Feb meeting that ANP are proposing to pass back the allocation of sites around Alton to EHDC ... they have noted that it is too tough to decide allocations. I recognise the challenges faced by a volunteer group, however:
 - o If a more sensible allocation to be delivered was defined (not the 700) the task would be more manageable
 - o The ANP and communities would need to find a balanced approach to agree allocations
 - o ... given the amount of effort and consultation invested, we should not pass this emotive issue to planners less connected to the Alton area

To confirm, I appreciate the effort invested by a range of our local representatives (EHDC and Alton Town councillors) and the work of the ANP team. The objective of this communication is reinforce points that I believe are well known / understood. There are a number of people who are mobilising to support you in your considerations / voice of challenge to the emerging plans.

Best regards
Jeroen Hodges

13. Nick Whitehead

FAO - Alton Town Councillors regarding Wednesday's Town Council meeting - with respect to the agenda item on the draft local plan.

I would be very grateful if the clerk could pass this message on to all councillors.

I write to express my concern that Alton Town Council is considering moving the assessment of allocation of housing back to EHDC. This appears to indicate that the Town Council believe that the residents of Alton are not interested in expressing a view on the most appropriate housing development in the town. This isn't the case and recent turnout at public consultations is but one item in evidence. Passing responsibility to EHDC disenfranchises local voters.

I understand that the current housing allocation puts Alton and Holybourne in Tier 1 whereas other towns in the locality, such as Whitehill and Bordon have been moved to Tier 2. This means that Alton will be required to take the majority of all new housing which is unreasonable in my view. I urge my local councillors to represent our locality.

Please do NOT pass the assessment of housing allocation to EHDC.

Regards
Nick Whitehead

14. Vanessa Gist

Dear Ms Harris

I understand that the Town Council will meet this evening to discuss, amongst other things, the response to be sent to EHDC regarding the Local Plan. I should be grateful if you would pass this message to the councillors.

The ANP Steering Group has put many hours into working out a way to allocate sites in and around Alton whilst meeting the requirements of the Local Plan and remaining true to the expressed wishes of the residents of Alton. I think they have proved fairly conclusively that this cannot be done. The basic premise - that Alton allocates sites for 1700 new houses - is unfair and unrealistic. In particular, the increase in traffic and the loss of greenfield areas will be hugely detrimental to residents.

Your draft response to the Local Plan is an excellent document. I should be grateful if, however, you could ensure that by declining to make site allocations you do not inadvertently pass that decision to EHDC and the planning department who will not necessarily take account of Alton residents' needs and wishes. EHDC needs to change its allocation of new houses to Alton and I have written accordingly to EHDC.

Many thanks,
Vanessa Gist

15. Richard Kelly: (additional comments to comment 7 above)

However, having thought a little further on the subject I have a couple of additional sentences which, if I may, I would like to be added to my earlier comments. As follows:

I understand that ATC and the ANPSG are fundamentally opposed to the draft Local Plan prepared by EHDC. That is welcome and good news. However, it is not clear to me that simply refusing to address the allocation issue really addresses that point. Surely it would be better to take up the offer from EHDC and make some partial allocation of (a lot) less than the 700 which the plan proposes. To try to rely on strategies for design,

climate change, protection for diversity, parking and transport may be a very dangerous approach.

Many thanks
Richard Kelly

16. Jane Davies

Please could you kindly copy this to all of the Town Councillors?

Dear All,

I am writing to ask that you consider your choice on the future development of Alton and the surrounding areas carefully. The current plans may have involved local people, but the land up for development is driven by the local landowners – which is clearly financially driven. There is no consideration of why people chose to live in Alton and the surrounding areas – as we want to live in a small town, within the green belt.

The current developments being undertaken in the area are not in keeping with the local area and mass development in Neatham and Holybourne will damage the green belt here for ever.

The Prime Minister has announced recently that the priority should be brownfield sites. Surely this is a better option than building on virgin greenfield sites? I know that you have an impossible task to balance government and local demands – but surely you are appointed to represent people like me, who live and work in the area.

Please do not hand back responsibility for the allocation to EDHC. Why does Alton have to take the brunt of all this new development? Places like Bordon have brown field sites, and infrastructure in place. Their councillors are all supporting the people and opposing any development.

Surely the impact of the National Park on East Hampshire needs to be factored into the equation. It is on our doorstep but should not mean that we need to take more than our allocation.

And then there are the issues of the density of the population, education and medical facilities, the environmental impact of more cars, more flooding, impact on wildlife, lack of employment opportunities (outside the construction sector). And then there is the concreting over of our beautiful landscape – and no doubt once building lines have been established, will set the precedent for more development in the future.

Now, we can access beautiful green space in Alton. Why would anyone want to build on it when there are other options?

Jane Davies

17. Siobhan Doyle

Dear ATC, Don & Graham

I read with interest the agenda for this evening's extra ordinary town council meeting and proposed decision making in respect to housing and the neighbourhood plan. I am heartened to see the town council pushing back to EHDC in respect of the disproportionate numbers allocated to us in Alton compared with the wider district of East Hants. I endorse the recommendation that you object to EHDC draft local plan as it stands, for the reasons you identify (especially the brownfield first approach). However this leads to me feel concerned about the second suggest action that the town council vote to remove its allocations from the

neighbourhood plan. I am very worried that this will mean EHDC have more power to allocate where ever and however they like (given they seem not to have adhered to listed policies to date when proposing Neatham Down). I am particular concerned this will give cart blank to the land owner in Holybourne to push though with their developer the proposed 200plus housing estate in the village (adding a third to the viallge's current size and with no consideration whatsoever of the traffic and safety issues already experienced in the village).

I note the extracts from tonight's meeting agenda;

The original scenario 1 (brownfield town centre) has been rendered undeliverable in the numbers originally conceived. These were predicated on the redevelopment of some of the parking areas in the town centre potentially though a Neighbourhood Development Order and in accordance with national policy, supported by the community at the engagement stages, to place brownfield redevelopment above greenfield. This could have potentially been achieved with the repurposing of some parking in the town centre with a greater a focus on active travel. However, the allocation of a satellite village, with resident's dependent upon car use to access the town centre for local services and shopping, rendered this unachievable. For a car dependent community such as Neatham Down, if access to Alton High Street proved difficult with a car, they would just go elsewhere along the A31.

I am concerned that in effect ATC is saying because Neatham Down is proposed, you wont endorse brownfield sites (carparks) within Alton as viable, because the car dependent ND site will need the carparks in Alton! This is no way prioritises brownfield first approach and ATC is in effect giving permission for ND by saying it needs car parks – ND quite frankly is a town not a satellite village and I couldn't care less if they went further up the A31!

Further extract states;

It is not the intention of the Neighbourhood Plan to be divisive, nor to create an environment where sectors of the community are seemingly "pitted" against each other, nor see the Plan shaping the town in such a way that it detracts from its future vibrancy and vitality. Neighbourhood Planning is designed to bring the community together, with a shared vision for the future development of the town.

At the moment, I very much feel this is pitting communities together and without ATC influencing where new development goes (as based on Altonian's feedback as evidence through your very effective consultation last year) there is a risk we are over run by development. I understand that the current Alton neighbourhood plan can be extended under recent government changes, and is no longer at risk of been seen as expired, and therefore ATC can object to EDHC draft local plan (item 8 on agenda) but also there is an opportunity to delay this decision on allocation of housing (item 9 on agenda) – which I ask you to consider.

Best wishes
Siobhan Doyle

18. Nick Taylor

FOA Pat Harris, Interim Town Clerk

Dear Pat,

I am writing to object to the proper planning in Holybourne and Neatham Down.

I am astonished that these are even being considered. Both proposed developments would irreversibly negatively impact on the community, culture and nature of the areas.

I cannot begin to imagine the negative impact they will have on the wellbeing of the local area both in terms of reducing access to nature (well evidenced as impacting on mental health) and also the safety of the area - crime, pollution, busy roads.

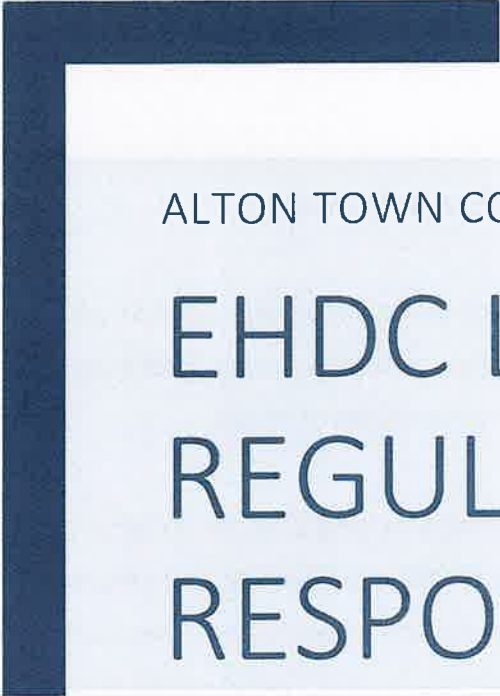
On that final point, Holybourne is already impassable with the current residents cars. Adding more simply makes no sense.

I do not know of a single person in the community who is in favour of such unsustainable and disproportionate development.

Best wishes,

Nick

APPENDIX B

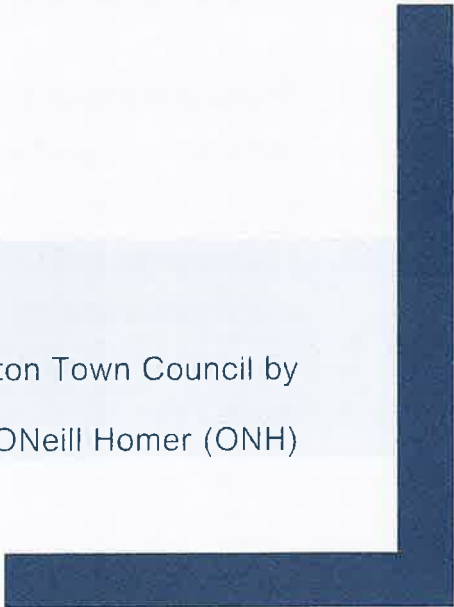


ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

EHDC LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 18 (2024) RESPONSE

Prepared for Alton Town Council by

ONeill Homer (ONH)



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document is being submitted by Alton Town Council in response to the East Hampshire District Council Local Plan 2021- 2040) Regulation 18 consultation (2024).
- 1.2 The new Local Plan 2021-2040 will cover the areas in East Hampshire outside of the South Downs National Park Authority. The SDNP area is covered by the South Downs Local Plan which was adopted on 2 July 2019 and is currently in the initial stages of review.
- 1.3 This response considers the proposed spatial strategy for the emerging plan, the settlement hierarchy and its application and consequences for Alton. It also addresses the proposed site allocations as well as selected other draft policies, informed by the work of Alton Town Council (ATC) including its response to the Climate Emergency and the on-going review of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan (ANP)
- 1.4 This response also reviews the supporting evidence bases to ensure they are robust and support the rationale of the proposed site allocations contained within, to support the requirement for the EHDC Local Plan to be considered to be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy as it moves to the next stage in preparation.

2.0 Background and Context

EHDC emerging Local Plan

- 2.1 There have been three previous Regulation 18 consultations for the emerging Local Plan, two held in 2019 and one in early 2023. The first Regulation 18 in 2019 sought, in terms of spatial strategy, to deliver a number of “local” sites together with Northbrook Park at Bentley and Whitehill/Bordon forming the two main “strategic sites”.
- 2.2 The second consultation, also in 2019, focused on 10 potential strategic development sites. This included two sites of direct relevance to Alton, Chawton Park Farm and Neatham Down.
- 2.3 Subsequently, EHDC Full Council on the 23rd September 2021 sought Members approval for the preferred site allocations option for the emerging Local Plan in order to proceed to the Regulation 19 consultation. Members were requested to approve one of the sites near Alton (Option 2)

"Chawton Park Farm" as its preferred option. It was, however, determined at that meeting that further work was requested on all sites and thus no preferred option was approved.

- 2.4 On the basis of its inclusion in this current Regulation 18 it is worth noting that in respect of the other site near Alton proposed at that time, Neatham Down (Option 3), the report to Full Council stated that this location was not recommended:

"Potential adverse impact on the landscape of the Wey Valley and the setting of Alton have been identified in respect of the site at Neatham Down, whilst there are concerns that the A31 – as a physical and psychological barrier – would hinder the integration of a new community with Alton"

- 2.5 EHDC subsequently halted the Local Plan process in summer 2022, restarting with a Regulation 18 Issues and Priorities paper in late 2022. This consultation asked for views on high level principles over where to distribute or concentrate new housing. The current Regulation 18 consultation indicates that the preferred spatial strategy is Option 2 - *"Concentrate new development in the largest settlements with more facilities and services"*

- 2.6 The other options were 1) disperse growth over a wider range of settlements, 3) distribute new development by population and 4) concentrate development in a new settlement or in a large urban expansion to one or more existing settlements.

Alton Neighbourhood Plan review.

- 2.7 There has been a period of considerable growth in Alton over the last ten to fifteen years. The previous EHDC Local Plan (JCS,) set out a requirement for 1,731 homes in Alton through the plan period of 2011 and 2028. When the original Alton Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2016, a minimum of 700 additional homes was required over the 1,031 either already built out, with permission or anticipated as windfall. At that time the Neighbourhood Plan allocated 1,027 against that 700 target, to ensure a good buffer, with further allocations made in the modified Alton Neighbourhood Plan (2021) totalling a further 305 homes (so in total 1,332) This figure was found to be in general conformity with the JCS.

- 2.8 Despite recent developments, the built-up area remains relatively contained in Alton within an area about 3 kilometres long and 2 kilometres wide. The built environment consists of four elements, namely: central older areas; outer residential areas; industrial areas; and Holybourne village. Alton is set within a distinctive chalk landscape setting, at the source of the River Wey. It

sits relatively hidden in a hollow, which is encircled by sloping downland that provides a green skyline. Immediately to the south-west is the northern edge of the South Downs National Park.

- 2.9 The Town Council approved a full review of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan in February 2023. A community led Steering Group (ANPSG) has met every two weeks since, gathering evidence, engaging with the community and subsequently writing the new plan. The draft introduction states:

“In summary, Alton residents respect the need for growth, but wish to retain the individual characteristics and heritage of the Parish. While further housing will be necessary, key elements to be considered must be maintenance of the town setting, protection of the environment and the development of infrastructure and services”.

- 2.10 It was agreed by the ANPSG that the town and potentially the town’s environs, would continue to be a focus for some future growth as a principal town in the settlement hierarchy, required by EHDC to take further housing development.
- 2.11 With no early indication of likely housing numbers from EHDC, the ANPSG, assisted by their consultants (ONH), considered scenario planning as part of the review of the neighbourhood plan, looking at the different ways the town could evolve in the longer term, to inform a choice about which development path to take.
- 2.12 Each scenario was framed as distinct and plausible, enabling more complex issues to be mapped and compared, which is particularly useful when exploring the relationship between settlement growth and the capacity and distribution of its current supporting infrastructure.
- 2.13 Its primary driver was answering the question “what will serve Alton well”? So much development over the preceding decade had not delivered the improvements to services, facilities and infrastructure which were required and this method of considering growth focused on addressing this, rather than being driven by an arbitrary number which leads to choosing the least worst options without considering the bigger, longer-term picture.
- 2.14 Once identified, these cumulative scenario options were tested with the community at the September 2023 drop-in sessions. The feedback, indicated that there was community opposition to scenario 3 (c.800) which included development in Holybourne of around 200 plus the development numbers from scenario 1 and 2. There were limited responses to the other options which were, Scenario 1 - c.400 homes (Brownfield sites) Scenario 2 - c.600 homes

(Brownfield plus land to the west of the town) and scenario 4, - c.1700 homes (Brownfield, Land to the west, Holybourne and to the south of the town)

- 2.15 EHDC feedback to the scenario planning was supportive of scenario 1 in principle but felt there was insufficient evidence to support the numbers proposed, had little comment on scenario 2, was supportive of scenario 3 relating to Holybourne but had landscape concerns over the South Alton element of scenario 4.
- 2.16 Subsequently, EHDC indicated to the ANPSG in October 2023 that the emerging Local Plan housing target for Alton would be 1,700, of which 1,000 would come from a strategic “satellite village” site outside of the Neighbourhood Plan boundary at Neatham Down, with a further c.260 from three other sites, Brick Kiln Farm (150), Beech (90) and Travis Perkins (20) of which the latter two fall outside of the Alton boundary.
- 2.17 The ANPSG had concerns over the likely constraints of a satellite village, given it would create a car dependent community, disconnected from the existing town and would need significant infrastructure within the site which would not benefit the wider town.
- 2.18 As such, the ANPSG sought to consider whether the Alton Neighbourhood Plan scenario 4 could, with some adjustment on locations, (likely to exclude Holybourne) provide a solution in order to negate the need for a satellite village workshopping the proposed scenario and commenced engagement with land promoters to discuss the infrastructure requirements needed in order to deliver the sites. This would then be used to prepare justified draft site allocation policies to include for testing with consultees through the statutory Regulation 14 consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan, scheduled for April 2024.
- 2.19 EHDC officers have indicated their concern about the Neighbourhood Plan progressing in this way and seeking to consider the full allocation, recommending that the Neighbourhood Plan only considers sites within its boundary of up to 700 (or a lower number leaving the Local plan site allocates the sites Brick Kiln Lane, Travis Perkins and Beech), or allocates no housing at all with EHDC allocating the full 1,700. They have further advised that the group of sites around South Alton should not be considered by ANPSG as these would be deemed to be a strategic allocation and thus only able to be included within the Local Plan.
- 2.20 EHDCs attention is drawn to the [inspectors report for](#) the South Oxfordshire District Council Core Strategy as it related to the Thame Neighbourhood Plan. The core strategy was modified in order to *“delete the strategic allocation and devolving the task of identifying sites for all of the town’s growth to the Thame Neighbourhood Plan”*.

- 2.21 The response by EHDC to direct the ANP to either promote no housing or a restricted choice of sites could be seen to pose a threat to the “integrity and freedom”¹ of the neighbourhood plan process through restraining the ANP from allocating where it believes best serves the local community.
- 2.22 The ANPSG believes that the neighbourhood plan being asked to allocate up to 700, does not work for Alton alongside a new “village” allocated by EHDC. With the sites available, it is an insufficient housing number to be viable for developers to provide the infrastructure and community facilities required for the town which can only be realised with delivery at scale. Furthermore, Scenario 1 (Brownfield) would be undeliverable in the numbers originally conceived if a satellite village went ahead as this option relied upon redevelopment of some of the parking areas in the town centre with a greater a focus on active travel, which is not possible if creating a car dependent community of up to 1,250 homes on the outskirts of town.
- 2.23 As such the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will be meeting with officers of EHDC before the end of February to consider the future of site allocations from the Neighbourhood Plan as with the constraints they have been told to work within, the result would just be more housing for Alton and little or no supporting infrastructure, which would not be supported by the community at referendum.

3.0 EHDC Regulation 18 Consultation Local Plan

- 3.1 ATC wishes to raise objection to the draft Local Plan as presented. The explanation for the objection is detailed below but the focus is concentrated on the following areas:
- The incorrect placement of Alton as a stand-alone tier one settlement
 - The resulting distribution of housing numbers across the settlements
 - The overall quantum of housing advocated in the plan
 - The inclusion of a 22% buffer without justification
 - The omission of capacity testing to obtain the numbers on each proposed site
 - The lack of brownfield first approach

Spatial Strategy.

- 3.2 EHDCs Planning Policy Manager recently stated² “*As planners we should concentrate development in the higher order settlements to encourage that modal shift so new residents can use walking and cycling to access those everyday facilities that they use.*”

¹ <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/06/Inspectors-final-report-Core-Strategy.pdf> (Para 55)

² EHDC Planning Policy Meeting 10th January 2024

- 3.3 This reflects the principle set out in S1.4 that the spatial strategy should be *“To concentrate the greater proportion of development in the larger and more sustainable settlements”*.
- 3.4 From this principle it logically follows that Alton, Whitehill/Bordon, Horndean and Liphook would take the bulk of the required housing development, most effectively achieved through intensification of existing town centre sites, which are the most accessible, making best efforts to use previously developed land before looking to greenfield sites. The NPPF is clear that substantial weight should be given to reuse of previously developed land.³ This “brownfield first” approach was also supported by Alton residents during the Alton Neighbourhood Plan informal engagements sessions in 2023.
- 3.5 The government recently announced that every council in England will be told that they will need to prioritise brownfield developments and instructed to be less bureaucratic and more flexible in applying policies that halt housebuilding on brownfield land.⁴ The EHDC Local Plan does not currently appear to provide evidence that this approach has been taken.
- 3.6 It is further noted in the current EHDC register of local brownfield land the council has not put any sites on Part 2 of the register. Granting permission in principle (PiP) for appropriate sites is a useful tool designed to speed-up smaller housing-led development and de-risk the sites helping to bring forward housing in these areas and should be utilised wherever appropriate.
- 3.7 The preferred spatial strategy must also consider this concentration of development in higher order settlements in terms of what will serve the existing community well to provide infrastructure solutions through housing delivery, which will benefit the existing as well as new communities, providing an integrated, well-connected community, which will continue to thrive through support for local services including long term vibrancy for town centres.
- 3.8 This effectively applies the principles of sequential testing to determine where development should be located, assessing of all of the brownfield and comparable deliverable and developable LAA sites within the town centre, then within the settlement boundaries before considering sites outside SPBs but within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary and only then sites beyond, as by definition the further out from the town centre sites are located, the less sustainable and accessible they are likely to be.

³ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2023-0035/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-planning-policy-for-brownfield-development>

- 3.9 ATC is concerned that whilst concentrate development in the higher order settlements is an appropriate approach, there is little evidence that the current spatial strategy considers brownfield first and therefore the Plan may not be consistent with national policy or justified.

Settlement Hierarchy & Housing Requirement.

- 3.10 In respect of the distribution of proposed development across the settlement hierarchy, ATC is concerned over the justification given for Alton to take 1,700 homes. It is only the latest revision of the settlement hierarchy which sets Alton apart from the other large settlements in the district, all previous hierarchy methodologies employed set it alongside Whitehill/Bordon and Liphook.
- 3.11 In total the three tier 2 settlements are required to take 1,098 compared with Alton as the single tier 1 taking 1,700. There is no justification for this pattern of distribution across the higher level settlements, which appears to disproportionately attribute development to Alton.
- 3.12 It is also inconsistent with previous approaches taken by EHDC in respect of Bordon/Whitehill in particular. The town is described as having a relatively large range of facilities and services for local residents. *"However, an even greater range of local facilities and services will be delivered through the development of a new town centre as part of regeneration activities."*(Page 368)
- 3.13 Cryptically, it is stated that EHDCs view on *"the amount of additional new homes that should be delivered at Whitehill & Bordon has changed over time"*, whilst local publicity congratulates the transformation of the town into a [sustainable green, healthy and connected town](#), which has received [over £34m from the LEP](#) to fund infrastructure improvements in addition to the multimillion point [S106](#) legal agreement signed in 2015. Contained in the draft plan is evidence of work undertaken to identify what further infrastructure works would be required with further development, yet there is no evidence of such detailed analysis for Alton.
- 3.14 There is information missing from the evidence base to explain how the proposal set out in the 2019 larger sites consultation for [1,257 additional homes in Bordon](#) has been more than halved. It is stated that compared to other sites the Gibbs Lane/Oakhanger Road site (LAA/WHI-021) has not performed well within the Accessibility Study. Clearly this depends on which sites it is being compared to, yet its average score is the same as Neatham Down, with its minimum score higher than Neatham Down.
- 3.15 Overall it is therefore unlikely that the plan would currently be found to be sound based on the information presented.

- 3.16 ATC would agree with the approach that the settlement hierarchy methodology takes, emphasising accessibility and living locally, *“Sustainable locations in the district are informed by the settlement hierarchy, which is based on a methodology of reducing carbon emissions from the transport sector, the largest contributing sector to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions in the district”*
- 3.17 However, the only proposed strategic allocation in the Plan is situated in an inaccessible location. This is therefore is not consistent with the application of the methodology and scores low on the accessibility score contained with the [East Hampshire Accessibility Study](#) with a minimum score of 4. (The maximum accessibility score is 58.6 and the median accessibility score for the district is 4.9)
- 3.18 As a technical note, site LAA/AL- 060 Holybourne does not appear in the accessibility appraisal. It does include LAA/AL-034 which was the larger Holybourne site which is no longer available. The report should therefore be updated to reflect the current position in terms of land availability.
- 3.19 In calculating the required housing number for the district, the updated NPPF states that the standard methodology is an *“advisory starting point”* (para 61). The supporting evidence base provides a clear direction in terms of use of the standard methodology and its application for the LPA. The [East Hampshire Technical Note September 2023](#), concluding that there is no exceptional circumstances to justify using an alternative method to calculate housing need.
- 3.20 This consultation identifies a need for a minimum number of 9,082 dwellings over the plan period (2021- 2040). (8,816 plus 266 unmet need from the SDNPA) As of 31 March 2023 part of this minimum requirement was already made up of 940 net completions and existing planning permissions totally 3,965 new homes, with a windfall allowance of 1,320, leaving a requirement for a further minimum of 2,857 new homes plus appropriate buffer.
- 3.21 ATC would question why a buffer of over 22% has been included, (in addition to meeting the unmet need from the SDNP) and appears excessive at 643 homes, resulting in a housing requirement figure of 3,500. Whilst the background paper notes the longer term potential unmet needs of the wider South Hampshire sub-region, this is not quantified and therefore lacks justification. Any buffer needs to be proportionate to the degree of risk, with a significant buffer indicates a lack of confidence over deliverability of sites chosen within the Plan. A buffer of 10% would reduce the overall requirement by some 358 homes over the plan period.
- 3.22 Capacity testing. The EHDC Policy team have indicated that the figures stated in the LAA should not be relied upon, which calls into question the degree of accuracy in the proposals. By way of

evidence, in Alton, the LAA site at Holybourne (LAA/AL-060) is tabled as having a capacity of 101. This is 100% below the figure publicly stated by the site promoters at 223. The proposed allocation at Brick Kiln Lane (LAA/AL-005) is stated at 150 yet the site promoters have confirmed their figure of 225. The sites comprising the land at known locally as "South Alton" (LAA/AL-056 Land North of A31) is stated on the LAA as 650, yet the site promoter responded to the previous Issues and Opportunities Regulation 18, stating up to 1,100 in total and 920 across the corresponding LAA sites. The site at Neatham Down (LAA/BIN-011) is stated as 1,000 but the site promoter is stating 1,250.

- 3.23 Therefore, firstly the desired "buffer" is likely to already exist within the emerging sites as demonstrated in this sample of four LAA sites but secondly, the lack of clarity over capacity testing may be resulting in surplus allocations being made, against the stipulated requirement.

Transport Study

- 3.24 This background paper does not provide sufficient information to enable consultees to form a view on transport impacts of the proposed site allocations. Whilst it assesses in high level terms, the impact of proposed development, particularly strategic sites, this information should be available at the earliest possible opportunity to help de-risk potential allocations moving forward and demonstrate positive preparation of the emerging plan. Whilst transport assessments are *"an iterative process and become more refined and detailed as the process draws to a conclusion"*⁵, the PPG is also clear that transport assessment should be undertaken throughout including as part of the initial evidence base (issues and opportunities) and part of the options testing as well as in the preparation of the final submission.
- 3.25 The [PPG](#) is clear that the key issues and outcomes should include assessing where alternative allocations or mitigation measures would improve the sustainability, viability and deliverability of proposed land allocations (including individual sites) provided these are compliant with national policy as a whole. The evidence presented does not even detail how traffic as a whole will move through the network with the cumulative impacts once the proposed housing number for the district is built out.
- 3.26 HCC LTP4 places emphasis on integrating land-use and transport planning, to enable sustainable travel choices and reduce the need to travel in the first place., with walking and cycling prioritised as transport modes that should be the first choice for shorter journeys. However, It is impossible to inform sustainable approaches to transport at a plan making level

⁵ [PPG Transport Evidence Bases in Plan Making and Decision taking](#)

without knowing the likely transport impacts of existing and proposed development or assessing where alternative allocations or mitigation measures would have.

Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating SA/SEA)

- 3.27 *Sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment are tools used at the plan-making stage to assess the likely effects of the plan when judged against reasonable alternatives⁶*
- 3.28 As prescribed, the SA Report must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that essentially ‘*identifies, describes and evaluates*’ the likely significant effects of implementing ‘the plan, and reasonable alternatives’. The report must then be considered alongside consultation responses when finalising the plan.
- 3.29 It is the view of ATC that this IIA does not adequately address the matter of “reasonable alternatives” for two reasons; firstly, the consideration of reasonable alternatives to the preferred spatial strategy option, “*Option 4 scores the least favourably in sustainability terms overall, with a new settlement expansion predicted to result in adverse effects across a number of objectives, including biodiversity, accessibility and emissions reductions, health, landscape, natural and water resources and economic growth.*”, yet the proposed strategic allocation for Alton is effectively an option 4 spatial strategy through the creation of a new settlement. There also appears to have been no assessment of reasonable alternatives within Alton which could cumulatively supply a similar quantum of housing in order to satisfy the housing requirement within the option 2 model.
- 3.30 Secondly, in assessing the reasonable alternatives, Appendix F & G evidence the high level assessments undertaken yet there is no obvious explanation as to how the scoring was considered and the weight given to the various objectives at this screening stage. The indication is that all bar three LAA sites in Alton, detailed in Appendix H, were rejected with no rationale and does not assess these three any further on the basis that they would fall within the Alton Neighbourhood Plan area. In view of one of the recommended options to the ANPSG being to not allocate with the ANP area at all, sites may subsequently be included within the Regulation 19 which had not been assessed at this stage. The evidence for demonstrating consideration of reasonable alternatives is not therefore sufficiently robust.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

- 3.31 There should be appropriate evidence supplied in the form of an assessment confirming why the chosen sites are 'more appropriate' than other comparable sites, set out in terminology that can be easily understood.

Proposed Site Allocations

- 3.32 As previously stated, there is concern that there is little evidence on any brownfield first approach, a lack of accuracy over site capacity and sufficient evidence to the rational for discounting sites. *This evidence needs to inform what is in the plan and shape its development rather than being collected retrospectively.*⁷
- 3.33 In consideration of the proposed sites which have been selected, ATC provides the following comments:

ALT1 – Land at Brick Kiln Lane Alton (LAA/AL-005)

- 3.34 This site has been considered by the ANPSG (part of scenario 2) and as such has been subject to engagement with the site promoter and workshopped by the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with the following outputs:
- 3.35 The site has as indicative capacity on the LAA of 150; the landowner has proposed a quantum of 225.
- 3.36 Any site allocations policy will need to include a requirement for highways infrastructure improvements in the form of a new 4 or 5 arm roundabout (the 5th arm potentially required for the proposed site ALT4 should this be confirmed as an allocation.)
- 3.37 Attention is drawn to the drainage issues currently experienced on the sunken lane (Brick Kiln Lane) from the farmed land to the north and where it currently drains into surrounding land.
- 3.38 There is also flooding in the area located around the proposed site entrance which would need to be mitigated (SUDS or other alleviation proposal)
- 3.39 The site is located at the entrance to the town from the Basingstoke direction and as a key gateway into Alton it is important that the build line is discretely set back from A339 so as not to create a hard development line on the approach to the town.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making> 038 Reference ID: 61-038-20190315

- 3.40 The site contains a number of TPO trees. To the west and north of the site is woodland identified as part of the network enhancement zone on the ANP Green Infrastructure Map. Built development should provide a buffer zone of a minimum of 50-100m from this woodland. In addition, wherever possible mature trees should be retained on site and where new planting is required, mature trees of scale are planted to break up the built environment.
- 3.41 Development on the site should continue to follow the northern edge of the original Will Hall Farm built form, (around 120m contour line) and wrap around the site rising slightly (but not exceeding the 130m contour line) to maintain the landscape setting.
- 3.42 Pedestrian and cycle routes into town and towards Beech should be improved with the introduction of a safe crossing point to enable walking and cycling to the western end of town to access school/hospital/GP/recreational facilities including the skatepark and Leisure Centre.

ALT2 - Chawton Park Surgery (LAA/AL-037)

- 3.43 This proposal is supported by ATC and a policy is included within the ANP.
- 3.44 However, given its location at the western end of the town, the surgery will remain largely reliant on access by car, which constrained its scope for expansion as the car park will need to be retained and potentially extended to accommodate additional patients.
- 3.45 With the proposal to allocate 1,700 new homes for Alton there is a question over whether the site is sufficiently able to support the additional c3,500 people, in the knowledge that Wilson Practice is already 2,787 patients oversubscribed (operating currently at 111%) and this is prior to the increase in patient numbers resulting from the current developments which have yet to be completed.

ALT3 – Land Adjacent to Alton Sewerage Treatment Works (LAA/AL-058)

- 3.46 The Town Council would support the inclusion of this site for an extension to the waste-water treatment use adjoining it, in order to increase capacity in this location.
- 3.47 There is no justification to allocate this site for more generic employment uses, which are not required given the proximity to ALT6 and the likely environmental issues of smell and/or noise for adjoining users.

ALT4- Land at Whitedown Lane (LAA/BEE-010)

- 3.48 This site is located outside of Alton in the neighbouring parish of Beech although, given its proximity to the town, would rely upon it for services and facilities. Alongside the proposed development on the other side of the A339 at Brick Kiln Farm (ALT1), development of this site could result in a very clear definition to the built environment on this gateway to the town.
- 3.49 The site has a number of similar constraints and opportunities as ALT1. A new arm to any roundabout on the A339 would be required for access. In addition there would need to be improvements to the surrounding area for active travel routes into the town along the A339 and the installation of a crossing point to enable safe passage to the centre of town and the facilities at the western end of the town.

ALT5- Land at Travis Perkins (Mounters Lodge Park (LAA/CHA009)

- 3.50 ATC raised no objection raised to planning application 59923 (response submitted 25th October 2023) for this site. A decision is pending.

ALT6- Land at Wilsom Road (LL/WOR-004)

- 3.51 This site was included on the EHDC Housing and Employment Allocations Plan in 2016. An application in 2016 was refused with an appeal lodged and subsequently withdrawn in 2017. Therefore, EHDC need to be satisfied that this site is both developable and deliverable prior to its inclusion in this Local Plan.

ALT7- Land at Lynch Hill (LAA/BIN-008)

- 3.52 This site has a complex history. There are two outline consents for the site, (49776/003 and 49776/004), an outstanding reserved matters application for the whole of the site (49776/004) as well as an outstanding reserved matters application for site access for pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to the site from Waterbrook Road (49776/005)
- 3.53 Listed under the constraints and opportunities for this site, the question of access is noted, stating that there is a private track which runs through the site, which connects Golden Chair Farm with the Waterbrook Road which will need to be factored into any reserved matters decision affecting access from the site into Waterbrook Road and how the site is laid out.
- 3.54 It is further noted that it is this privately owned track which would be required to enable pedestrian and cycle access to the proposed site ALT8; without which access to Alton would be

across the A31. It is therefore vital for the delivery of both this site and consideration of ALT8 that there is certainty in the securing of this right of way for public access.

ALT8 – Land at Neatham Manor Farm (LAA/BIN-011)

- 3.55 This site is the sole proposed strategic allocation in the emerging Local Plan. As previously noted, in spatial terms it is more aligned with option 4 rather than the preferred option 2 as it creates a new satellite village. The site promoter is advocating delivery of 1,250 homes on the site.
- 3.56 The site scores poorly overall in the [Living Locally Accessibility Study](#), with one of the lowest minimum scores in the district at a minimum of 4 given its inaccessible location. Residents would be dependent upon the private car, undermining the environmental limb of sustainability as set out in the NPPF 2023, the priorities and objectives of EHDC emerging Local Plan and ATCs response to the climate emergency as well as the aim of HCC's Transport Plan (LTP4) in creating a prioritising active travel by foot and bicycle.
- 3.57 As noted in ALT7 above, there is a question over potential constraints over the proposed safe route for walking and cycling over the existing third party owned bridge and the relationship of any proposed route through the Lynch Hill employment site accessing out to Waterbrook Road. Without resolution, the site is unlikely to be considered deliverable.
- 3.58 The EHDC [Interim SA Report \(Strategic Site Options\) February 2021](#), stated, in relation to the previous proposal to allocate a site for up to 600 homes in this area
- "this area is close to the South Downs National Park and is considered to be a highly sensitive landscape with a low capacity for development in the Council's Landscape Capacity Study (2018). An option for employment development was previously considered through the LAA and SA in 2018, prior to the Draft Plan consultation, but ultimately not taken forward for detailed appraisal. Key concerns at the time were in respect of landscape and groundwater flood risk."*
- 3.59 The EHDC [2018 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment \(SFRA\)](#) identifies the site is substantially affected by areas of groundwater flood risk. As such there is no evidence that reasonable alternatives have not been adequately assessed, not least in terms of sequential testing to identify if there are better options for site allocation.
- 3.60 The [Interim SA \(2021\)](#) states at 8.5.15 that Neatham Down is "peripheral or distant from existing services" its location "*considered to be more problematicin terms of the level of*

intervention required to improve accessibility and in terms of the number of existing residents who would benefit from facilities delivered on site.”

- 3.61 Whatever improved to accessibility could be made, parts of the site would remain at least a 30 - 40 minute walk to the middle of the High Street (2km) and more than a 10 minutes cycle and therefore does not accord with the [Manual for Streets](#) recommendations (800m with an upper limit of under 2km)
- 3.62 It is clearly not accessible and in EHDCs own words the A31 “*provides a physical and psychological barrier [and] would hinder the integration of a new community with Alton.*”⁸
- 3.63 There is a real risk of the development becoming, in reality, far removed from the option 2 spatial strategy intention to extend existing larger settlements and will in effect create a new “garden village”. The lack of sustainability of such new settlements is illustrated by the Report “[Garden Villages and Garden Town: Vision and Reality](#)”⁹ This summarises their findings which include these settlements being:
- Car dependent;
- Unlikely to be self-sufficient or self-contained in a meaningful way;
- Good/excellent public transport was wanted and a stated aim but rarely achieved as funding in uncertain; and
- Cycling was underfunded. (This has been a concern voiced previously by ATC the LCWIP is unable to be delivered due to the cost of implementation with no funding through HCC)
- 3.64 It is also likely that a viability assessment which would need to factor in the required infrastructure, local services and elements such as the need for subsidised bus services, would result in an inability to deliver the quantum of affordable housing required locally as part of the ANP [Housing Needs Assessment](#)
- 3.65 In conclusion, ATC would not support the selection of this site for development for the reasons set out above.

Support for Alton Town Centre

- 3.66 ATC is pleased to see a specific policy DM24(Alton Town Centre Uses). However, the proposed area is currently not identified on the policies map, so it is not possible to comment on the extent

⁸ <https://easthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g3773/Public%20reports%20pack%2023rd-Sep-2021%2018.00%20Council.pdf?T=10>

⁹ Foundation for Integrated Transport and Transport for New Homes (Subtitled “The Garden Village Dream Vs. The Tarmac Estate”) (2020).

of the area. EHDC have been made aware that the ANP is developing a Town Centre Masterplan (commissioned through Locality with AECOM) which also considers the extend of the primary shopping area as well as considers the opportunities for redeveloping parts of the town centre to improve the mix of uses and introducing more residential spaces to intensity use of this most accessible part of the town.

- 3.67 To support the Alton Town Centre policy, development within Alton should be in a way that is fully integrated with the existing community and supports the town centre in order to benefit the existing businesses located there. ATC therefore agrees with the 'town centre first'¹⁰ approach to retail and other town centre uses within Alton and welcomes draft policy E5 (5.5) "*Any development that would significantly harm the vitality and viability of a defined centre or small local parade (3 or more units) will not be permitted.*"
- 3.68 As such new developments should not be providing local centres which would deter use of the town centre (ATC objected to the proposed café on the Molson Coors Brewery Site redevelopment, as it would fail this sequential test¹¹ - the proposed café was subsequently withdrawn from the application)
- 3.69 ATC is also keen to ensure the town centre adapts to current trends, which sees high streets being focal points for social interaction and community services with improved public realm spaces. As such the Local Plan, should respond to the need to decrease carbon emissions in the town centre, through policies to improve air quality and canopy cover, restricting HGV vehicles and improving accessibility by active travel modes.

Other Policy Areas of Note.

- 3.70 Climate Change. Whilst supportive of the policies, ATC would like to see the Local Plan go further, where it is able, namely, mandating the use of community energy systems such as CHP or district heating in site allocation policies where they relate to development over a particular size and certainly on strategic sites.
- 3.71 In addition, the need for sustainability assessments post occupancy could be relaxed for developments which are certified passivhaus. This would assist the developer and case officer in not having to monitor and report post occupation and would avoid the performance gap issues experienced once properties are occupied.

¹⁰ <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/media/8743/download?inline> page 268

¹¹ https://planningpublicaccess.easthants.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=consulteeComments&keyVal=_EHANT_DCAPR_245727&consulteeCommentsPager.page=3

- 3.72 Settlement Policy Boundary. ATC is supportive of the proposed amendments to the settlement boundary. It is noted that in Alton, Site 12 (Cowdray Park) and Site 13 (Salisbury Close) are being reviewed as a potential Local Green Space allocations within the ANP protect them from future development as a valued community amenity spaces.
- 3.73 Design policies are overall supported and the ANPSG has worked with AECOM in the creation of design guidance and codes for Alton which will nuance the design policies within the Local Plan to apply specifically within the Alton Area.
- 3.74 It is noted that in relation to Appendix F of the draft Local Plan (Parking Standards) there should be consideration given to mandating wider dimensions for parking bays where electric charging points are included as part of the design. (up to an additional 30cm) to account for wall and floor mountings.

Summary and conclusions

- 3.75 In summary, ATC is concerned that the draft Local Plan is unable to demonstrate that it meets the tests of soundness.
- 3.76 The plan is not positively prepared, demonstrated through evidence inconsistencies. The identified vision and priorities are not reflected in the selection of the strategic site, which conflicts with the approach of the plan to support enlarging existing higher tier settlements (options 2) yet in reality has sought the creation of a new settlement (option 4).
- 3.77 The selection of the strategic site would be a significant incursion into a valued landscape, without meaningful attachment to the existing town, which would result in funding for infrastructure arising being consumed, in the main, within the site to attempt to mitigate its location constraints. It is therefore inconsistent with the NPPF.
- 3.78 *New communities with poor accessibility encourage private vehicle dependent travel, which undermines initiatives to encourage sustainable transport use in line with net zero objectives and promote healthy lifestyles.*¹² The Local Plan has the opportunity to be outcome focused to enable the aspirations of planning policy priorities to be reflected in the resulting schemes for the delivery of housing. Currently, there is a disconnect between the desired achievements of many of the emerging policies and the likely reality of the adverse impacts of development located where they currently proposed.

¹² https://www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2021/december/the-location-of-development/#_Toc89101909

- 3.79 The location of a new “village” at Neatham Down also leaves open the possibility for gradual and creeping coalescence with Holybourne at a later date, or a larger development with further encroachment into the open countryside.
- 3.80 There is a lack of credible evidence in respect of site allocation numbers. As the site allocation figures are not to be relied upon, with no capacity testing undertaken, it is difficult to see any evidence to support the need for a large strategic site if the draft plan has over supplied, given the examples used earlier in this submission. In addition, there is no evidence-based justification for a 22% buffer to meet an undefined need elsewhere (excluding the SDNP which has already been accounted for)
- 3.81 The plan is purely numbers driven and currently appears to be attributing numbers to sites to hit a target figure, even though no capacity testing has been undertaken and numbers are evidently far removed from those sought by landowners/promoters.
- 3.82 Further, there is insufficient evidence to support the distribution of development across the settlement hierarchy, which sets Alton apart through the demotion of all other towns and the resulting overall percentage of housing the town is required to allocate as a result.
- 3.83 It is the view of ATC that the Local Plan would not be in conformity with the requirement for a plan to be justified.¹³ *“taking into account reasonable alternatives and based on proportionate evidence”* for the following identified reasons:
- 1) A lack of evidence that sufficient endeavors have made to take a brownfield first approach nor seeking to consider Permission in Principle (PiPs) to de-risk smaller brownfield sites.
 - 2) A lack of evidence in the consideration of reasonable alternatives in relation to the IIA and site allocations work, including the omission of any detailed work on Alton sites prior to their rejection.
 - 3) A lack of sufficient evidence in the transport study to support how the overall quantum of development would impact the highways network and no settlement specific mitigation requirements (with the exception of some high level work on requirements for sites at Whitehill/Bordon)
 - 4) No evidence to confirm that any transport impact/capacity work has been undertaken as part of the selection of the sole strategic site; HCC highways should be a proactive planning partner throughout. It is accepted that transport assessments are iterative but should be part of positive planning not reverse engineering.

¹³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf Para 35.

- 3.84 In conclusion, whilst many of the policies in the plan are aspirational, they are currently not deliverable, principally due to the way in which the spatial strategy is sought to be implemented. The citing the proposed “new village” strategic allocation in a constrained location, the unjustified quantum of development sought within the Plan and the distribution of the proposed sites across the settlement hierarchy.
- 3.85 It is the view of ATC that as a result, the current draft plan, if taken forward, would fail at examination.

'The battle resumes! Warehouses at Junction 5? – an update from VOW

The threat to the rural character of our part of England as a great place to live has not gone away. The speculative proposal for an enormous warehouse development on 80 acres of farmland adjacent to Junction 5 of the M3 Motorway is still alive and kicking.

To combat this assault a pressure group called Villages Oppose Warehouses, or VOW, has been set up by concerned citizens. See www.villagesopposewarehouses.org.

As most will know, the Pre-Application was received by Hart District Council in 2022. It was eventually rejected by Hart on several grounds – but principally because of its non-conformance with local plans and policies. However, the London-based developer, "Obsidian Strategic", has popped up again and has announced its intention to submit a new Outline Application some time in February/March this year.

Hart will publish the new Outline Application, when received, on its planning website and will invite comments. If the proposals are to be rejected again it is absolutely critical that a large number of comments from individuals opposing the Application are received by Hart.

But why should you?

The developer's plans show 5 very large warehouses on land bordering the Motorway. The total warehouse floor area is some 105,000 sq metres – making it 20% larger than a very similar site planned for Junction 7 and one of the very largest in the UK. You could fit 46 league football pitches into 80 acres. Each warehouse is some 20m tall – that's about a 7-storey flat-roofed office block.

The local flood risk, already ever-present on the M3 at Junction 5, will be increased significantly. In addition to increased incidents of flooding there are serious environmental and bio-diversity issues resulting from the proximity of SSSIs at Bartley Heath.

BUT the issue that should be of real concern to all neighbouring parishes is that of traffic on surrounding roads. The developer has declared that the site will operate round the clock, meaning 24 hours a day, every day, non-stop throughout the year. The developer's own figures claim over 12,000 – I repeat: over 12,000 - vehicle movements between 7am and 7pm alone. A significant number of these will be HGVs. Will the Motorway and Junction 5 cope with these numbers? Consider this: an extra vehicle, mainly HGVs, entering or leaving Hart's road infrastructure every few seconds, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, will not add to the quality of life for anyone in this area. Especially when all of those vehicles start looking for 'least cost' routes or 'rat runs' and backroads in the event of traffic delays. Junction 5, the A30, the B3349, the A287 and even the A31 are going to feel that impact as well as Odiham, Hook, Crondall, South Warnborough, Hartley Wintney and the Crookhams. We have recently briefed Farnham TC Planning Group, who share our concerns. Those of us who use Junction 5 frequently are already aware of ever-lengthening rush-hour queues.

Recent research (Hampshire Chronicle, 7 Jan) by Claims.co.uk has shown that Hampshire is already the most congested county in the UK. We trust that Alton won't be keen to see this added to.

So – what can Alton do to influence the outcome? We hope that the Council will recognise the wide ripples that will spread out from a development such as this. But, just as important, will be action from you, as local residents. Not only can you register your concerns with Hart when Hart asks for your opinion, you can also alert any of your friends and neighbours who might not be hearing this to what's about to happen to this part of our shared rural environment. When the time comes – in February or March - it will up to all of us to stand up and be counted.



CHAWTON PARK INDOOR BOWLS CLUB LTD
CHAWTON PARK ROAD
ALTON
HANTS GU34 1RF

Tel: 01420 541546
E-mail: info@cpibc.net
28th February 2024

Pat Harris
Interim Town Clerk
Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hants GU34 1HD

Dear Pat,

Re: Landlords Consent

Further to my letter dated 19th February 2024 I have now received from South East Water c/o Dalcour Maclaren the attached draft Licence along with a plan.

Could you kindly substitute these documents for the ones that I included in my letter of the 19th February.

Hopefully you now have everything to submit to the Council early next month – that is my letter of application for Landlords Approval plus the documents now enclosed.

If there is anything further that you require please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

David Pennington
on behalf of the Directors of Chawton Park Indoor Bowls Club.



LICENCE

AN AGREEMENT made the day of February 2024 between Chawton Park Indoor Bowls Club of Chawton Park Rd, Alton GU34 1RF (hereinafter called "the Licensors") and South East Water Limited c/o Dalcour Maclaren Ltd, of The Lodge, Thorncroft Manor, Leatherhead, KT22 8JB (hereinafter called "SEW").

WHEREBY

1. THE LICENSORS grant unto SEW the use of the land defined and shaded yellow on the attached plan 23009621_PLN_LI_1.1 (not to be more than 668 square metres), or such reduced area as is actually taken up by SEW for the stationing of temporary site offices, stores and car parking and general storage (but no overnight accommodation) all solely in connection with the scheme known as Lord Treloar – Mains Reinforcement and for no other purposes whatsoever. Access to the land is to be from Chawton Park Road as approximately shown shaded green on the attached plan.
2. THE LICENCE shall commence on Monday 22nd April 2024 (or such later date as SEW may advise) and shall terminate TWO calendar months after the date of commencement if not terminated prior to that under the provisions of this agreement.
3. A PAYMENT of £3,000 (three thousand pounds) only will be given to the Licensors for the period from commencement and the first two months of occupation, such payment is payable on signing this agreement. Any period of occupation beyond the initial two-month occupation period will require SEW to pay an additional £2,000 per calendar month or part thereof to the Licensors for any such further period of occupation. For the avoidance of doubt occupation will be deemed to have ceased once all equipment and materials have been removed off site.
4. SEW has the right at their sole discretion to extend the occupation period referred to in Clause 2 beyond the initial two months for an additional two months.
5. SEW and their contractors must have access available to the site at all times.
6. SEW hereby covenants to the Licensors as follows:
 - (a) to pay the said sums in the manner aforesaid
 - (b) to pay all rates, taxes, assessments and outgoings whatsoever now or at any time during the term hereby granted payable in respect of the land and the use thereof

- (c) to release and fully indemnify in perpetuity the Licensors from and against all actions, proceedings, claims, demands, damages, costs, expenses arising out of or reasonably incurred in consequence of the exercise by SEW or any persons in its authority of the Licence and permission hereby granted or in consequence of any breach, non-performance, negligence or non-observance of any of the covenants on SEW's part herein contained and maintain £5 million public liability cover for itself and its contractors throughout the licence period and to provide, if requested by the Licensors, proof of such insurance.

In respect of any damage to the Licensor's site whenever arising or identified it shall be a condition of the indemnity that the Licensor shall have first given notice in writing to SEW identifying such damage and affording SEW the opportunity of remedying it at its own cost within a reasonable time and SEW shall have failed to remedy the damage within such time.

- (d) to comply with all Public Health, Town Planning and other requirements in relation to the occupation of the site
- (e) to carry out any works in a proper and workmanlike manner and to take any reasonable precautions against damage to the land and adjoining land owned and/or occupied by the Licensors and to protect, preserve, maintain or replace all hedges, fences, walls, ditches, drains and pipes thereon and to make good to the reasonable satisfaction of the Licensor any such damage that may be caused with reference to the photographic Schedule of Condition taken by SEW prior to entry to the site
- (f) to reinstate the land to its previous condition once occupation of the site has ceased such work only to be deferred on account of unsuitable weather
- (g) not to assign, sub-licence or part with the Licence hereby granted or any part thereof except to SEW's appointed contractors and their sub-contractors for the scheme and to exercise proper control over them at all times
- (h) to keep the licence area and adjacent land secure at all times and in particular to keep the gates locked at the access to the site off the public highway so long as this is not enforced against by the Council Rights of Way department
- (i) to take a photographic schedule of condition detailing the area of land to be taken under this licence prior to entry on to site

- (j) to fully contain any foul drainage from the site within sealed containers to Local Authority Building Regulation standards and to remove all without leaving any residual contamination at the termination of the licence.
- (k) to take all reasonable steps to prevent entry on to the site or on to the access to the site by third parties and if such entry is taken then to take all reasonable steps to remove them promptly.

7. It is hereby expressly agreed that the provisions of The Contract (Rights of Third parties) Act 1999 shall not apply to this licence.

Signed

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF

CHAWTON PARK INDOOR BOWLS CLUB

Witnessed by:

Witness's Name:

Witness's Address:

Signed

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF

SOUTH EAST WATER LIMITED

Witnessed by:

Witness's Name:

Witness's Address:

 Licence area
 Access

LIMIT OF DEVIATION 10M

Grantor:

Chawton Park Indoor Bowls Club Limited

Location:

Chawton Park Road, Newtown, Alton,
Chawton, Hampshire, GU34 1RQ

Coord: 470836 138260

Schema Name:
Lord Treloar - Mains Reinforcement Compound

Drawing Name:

Licence Plan

Drawing No: 23009621 PLN LI 1.1

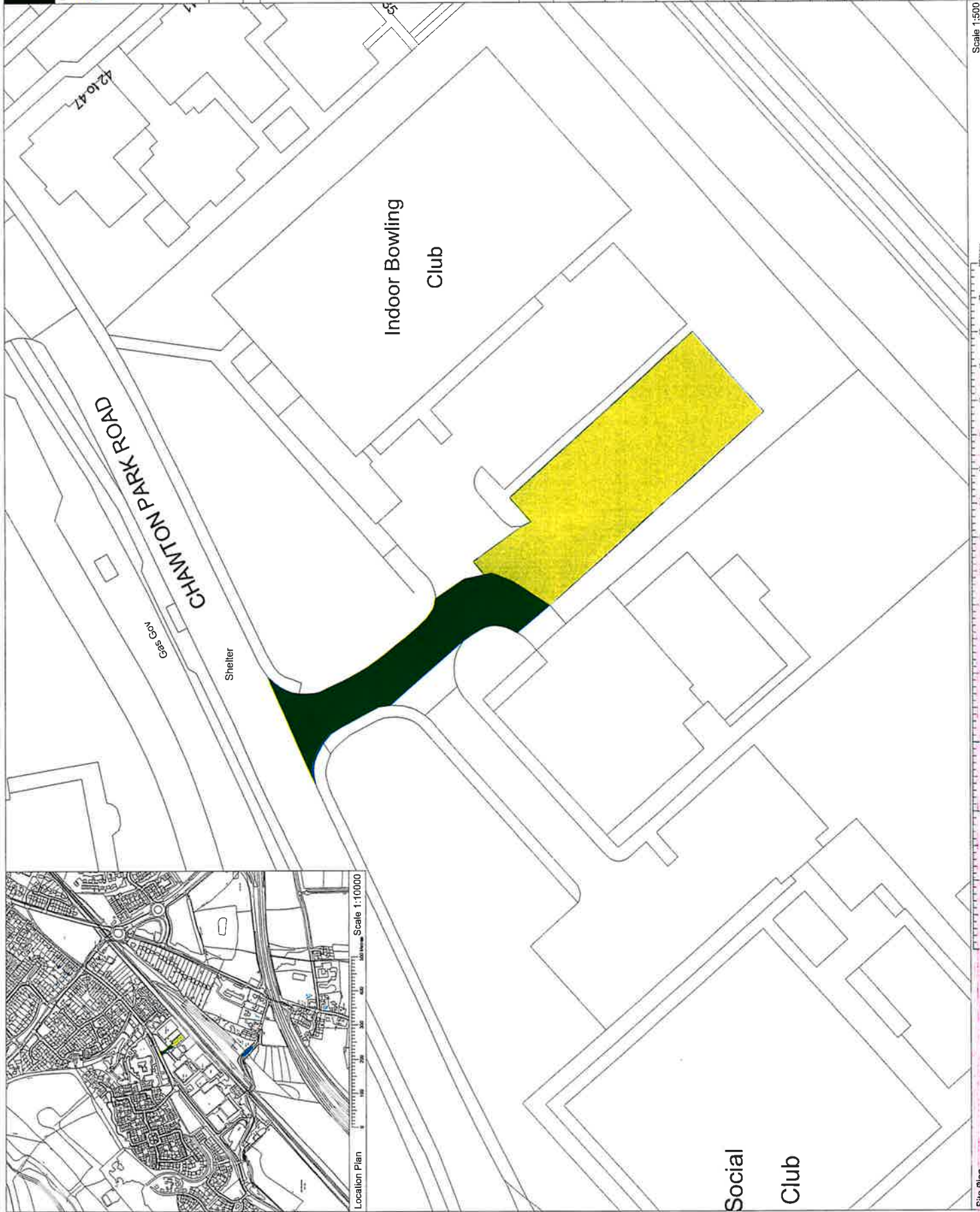
Rev	Date	Description
-	30.11.2023	First Issue

7

1 of 1

Sheet Size: A3

south east water

[illegible]

DATE: _____

Scale 1:500



ALTON TOWN COUNCIL GRANT APPLICATION

PART 1 - YOUR ORGANISATION

NAME OF ORGANISATION

ALTON LIONS CLUB (CIO) REG NO: 1174502

NAME OF CONTACT

Mrs Moira Baker

ADDRESS OF CONTACT

**1 Archery Rise,
Alton,
GU34 1PG**

TELEPHONE NO:

DAYTIME

EVENING

EMAIL ADDRESS:

PLEASE OUTLINE BRIEFLY THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANISATION

Alton Lions Club (CIO) is part of Lions Clubs International, established to enable men and women to volunteer to serve their local communities. The UK Lions Club (CIO) constitutional objects are: Advancement of citizenship; promoting the Voluntary Sector for the public benefit; promoting volunteering; the relief of poverty and relief of those in need; advancement of health and the saving of lives; promoting the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment; promoting community participation in healthy recreation.

PLEASE GIVE NUMBERS IN THE
ORGANISATION WHO ARE

A) PAID -	None
B) VOLUNTEERS -	32

HOW MANY MEMBERS/BENEFICIARIES
LIVE WITHIN ALTON

27 in Alton; 5 in villages

PART 2 – GRANT REQUEST

AMOUNT OF GRANT APPLIED FOR

£ 500.00

WHAT IS THE TOTAL COST OF THE
PROJECT/ITEM/SERVICE?

£ 2,500

HAS MATCHED FUNDING ALREADY
BEEN SECURED? IF SO, PLEASE STATE VALUE

£ 1,500

WHAT IS THE GRANT TO BE USED FOR?

The grant will be used to pay for professional local entertainers at the Alton Lions 'Party in the Park' 2024, to be held in Alton Public Gardens on Saturday, June 8.

Entertainment will include: Punch & Judy Show; live music; Mill Cottage Farm petting animals; inflatable Slide and Bouncy Castle; Safari Treasure Trail.

This year's theme is 'Safari in the Park'

HAS YOUR ORGANISATION APPLIED FOR A
GRANT ELSEWHERE TOWARDS THIS PROJECT?

YES/NO **YES**

IF YES, PLEASE
GIVE DETAILS

SECURED / PENDING

Sponsorship is currently being sought to support the event which is also being seed funded up to £1,500 by Alton Lions Club.

WHAT OTHER FUNDRAISING HAS BEEN DONE TOWARDS THIS ITEM/PROJECT?
EG CAKE STALL, COFFEE MORNING

Lions seed funding has in part been held over from 'Party in the Park' 2021 – supplemented by funding from the Service Budget.

The event in the Public Garden will be open to all, with no admission charge.

It is an event run by Alton Lions as an intergeneration event for the community. Participation in activities will be via suggested affordable donation in order to make it accessible to all.

It will celebrate 50 years of Lions serving the community of Alton and the surrounding area.

YOU ARE INVITED TO GIVE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT ASSIST THE
COUNCIL IN CONSIDERING YOUR APPLICATION

Please note at least 90% of money raised by Alton Lions Club is used to support those in need in our community, as well as activities designed to benefit the community as a whole.

Any remainder is donated to Lions Clubs International to support Lions work in disaster areas around the world, as well as relief of poverty, and implementation of initiatives designed to improve public health.

PART 3 - TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL APPLICANTS

PLEASE STATE BALANCES IN HAND AT THE END OF LAST FINANCIAL YEAR

£34,090 (Excluding grants, sponsorship & special donations.)
(July to June 2022/23)

LEVEL OF UNALLOCATED RESERVES

None

HOW MUCH DID THE GROUP RAISE LAST YEAR (EG FUNDRAISING BY THE GROUP OTHER THAN BY GRANT APPLICATION)?

Balance at 30 June 2023 - £47,693

PLEASE ENSURE ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION IS ENCLOSED WITH THIS APPLICATION

CHECKLIST

☐

All relevant parts of the form completed ✓

☐

Form signed ✓

☐

Most recent accounts (Audited or draft) ✓

☐

Constitution/Rules ✓

☐

Child Protection Policy (if applicable) ✓

Copies of this completed form and any supporting papers will appear on a Town Council Committee Agenda and will be discussed by the Committee in the presence of the Press and Public.

I DECLARE THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF THAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS CORRECT. I ALSO DECLARE THAT ANY GRANT AWARDED WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSES OUTLINED IN THIS APPLICATION AND I WILL COMPLETE A GRANT EVALUATION FORM WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF THE AWARD OF GRANT. I UNDERSTAND THAT ALTON TOWN COUNCIL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO RECLAIM THE GRANT IN THE EVENT OF IT NOT BEING USED FOR THE PURPOSE SPECIFIED.

NAME

.....**Moira E Baker**.....

SIGNATURE

.....**Moira E Baker**.....

POSITION

.....**Alton Lions Club President**.....

DATE...**23.../ 02...../...2024**.....

Completed applications should be sent to: Alton Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1HD

Applications are also available from our web site www.alton.gov.uk



MULBERRY & CO

Chartered Certified Accountants
& Chartered Tax Advisors

9 Pound Lane
Godalming
Surrey, GU7 1BX

t + 44(0)1483 423054
e office@mulberryandco.co.uk
w www.mulberryandco.co.uk

Our Ref: MARK/ALT001

The Town Clerk
Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

6th February 2024

Dear Pat

Re: Alton Town Council

Internal Audit Year Ended 31 March 2024 – Period Ended 31st December 2023

Executive summary

Following completion of our interim internal audit on 6th February 2024 we enclose our report for your kind attention and presentation to the council. The audit was conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines and testing was risk based. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples have where appropriate covered the entire year to date.

Our report is presented in the same order as the assertions on the internal auditor report within the published AGAR. The start of each section details the nature of the assertion to be verified. Testing requirements follow those detailed in the audit plan previously sent to the council, a copy of this is available on request. The report concludes with an opinion as to whether each assertion has been met or not at the interim audit. Where appropriate **recommendations for action are shown in bold text and are summarised in the table at the end of the report.**

The interim audit was conducted remotely. The Clerk had prepared the information advised in advance of the visit, and I have the impression that accounting records are neatly maintained and easily accessible. Other information was reviewed through discussion with the Clerk and a review of the council website <https://www.alton.gov.uk/>

Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that are required to be reported to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk.

The councillors and clerk appear to be informed, there is evidence of council taking measured decisions using the reports and financial information provided by the clerk. It is therefore clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am therefore pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose.

Whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well-ordered system.

It is our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Alton Town Council are fit for purpose and more importantly followed by councillors and office staff alike.

Regulation

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. In addition to this, a smaller authority is required by Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to “undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.”

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance activity designed to improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the authority on whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

Internal audit’s function is to test and report to the authority on whether its specific system of internal control is adequate and working satisfactorily. The internal audit reports should therefore be made available to all Members to support and inform them when they considering the authority’s approval of the annual governance statement.

Independence and competence

Your audit was conducted by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry & Co. We confirm we are independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the council and neither the internal auditor or the firm have any conflicts of interest with the audit client, nor do they provide any management or financial assistance to the client.

Your auditor has over 30 years’ experience in the financial sector with the last 20 years specialising in local government finance and internal audit.

Engagement Letter

An engagement letter was previously issued to the council covering the internal audit assignment. Copies of this document are available on request.

Planning and inherent risk assessment

The scope and plan of works including fee structure was issued to the council under separate cover. Copies of this document are available on request. In summary, our work will address each of the internal control objectives as stated on the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR. As part of the inherent risk assessment, we have concluded that:

- There have been no reported instances of breaches of regulations in the past
- The client uses an industry approved financial reporting package
- The client regularly carries out reconciliations and documents these
- There is regular reporting to council
- The management team are experienced and informed
- Records are neatly maintained and referenced
- The client is aware of current regulations and practices
- There has been no instance of high staff turnover

It is our opinion that the inherent risk of error or misstatement is low, and the controls of the council can be relied upon and as such substantive testing of individual transactions is not required. Testing to be carried out will be “walk through testing” on sample data to encompass the period of the council year under review.

Table of contents

		TEST AT INTERIM	TEST AT INTERIM	TEST AT INTERIM	TEST AT FINAL	PAGE
A	BOOKS OF ACCOUNT	✓				4
B	FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	✓	✓			4
C	RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE	✓				4
D	BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES	✓		✓	✓	4
E	INCOME		✓			5
F	PETTY CASH	✓	✓		✓	5
G	PAYROLL		✓		✓	5
H	ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS			✓	✓	5
I	BANK AND CASH	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
J	YEAR END ACCOUNTS	✓			✓	6
K	LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW	✓				6
L	PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION	✓		✓		6
M	EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS – INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS	✓			✓	7
N	PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS	✓				7
O	TRUSTEESHIP	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7
	ACHIEVEMENT OF CONTROL ASSERTIONS AT INTERIM AUDIT DATE		✓	✓		8
	INTERIM AUDIT POINTS CARRIED FORWARD					3

Interim audit points

None at quarter 3

A. BOOKS OF ACCOUNT

Internal audit requirement

Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.

Audit findings

Tested at 30-06-23 – no further testing required.

B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS

Internal audit requirement

This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

Tested at 30-09-23 – no further testing required.

C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Internal audit requirement

This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

Audit findings

Tested at 30-06-23 – no further testing required.

D. BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES

Internal audit requirement

The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

Audit findings

The council has £1,044,231 of earmarked reserves across a range of identifiable reserves. There is evidence of movement on the reserves. I would recommend the title of the CIL reserves are augmented with the expiration date so that it is clear beyond reasonable doubt if and when monies have to be utilised by.

The council has circa £679,106 in general reserves. The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioner's guide states 'the generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure' (para 5.33).

The general reserve balance is comfortably within this range.

The minutes of council show that there is regular reporting of actual versus budget information. I was provided with the income and expenditure report for the period ended 6th February and note, income is 106.0% of budget and expenditure 66.1%. The additional income is in the main due to the sale of 13 Market Square.

I reviewed the detailed income and expenditure report and noted that

- cost centre 108 has exceeded its budget by £965.00
- cost centre 202 has exceeded its budget by £4,509 – however this is offset by £3,548 of additional income
- cost centre 311 has exceeded its budget by £3,644 – however this is offset by £1,403 of additional income
- cost centre 320 has exceeded its budget by £4,735 – however this is offset by £12,135 of additional income
- cost centre 401 has exceeded its budget by £17,161 – however this is offset by £4,765 of additional income
- cost centre 503 has exceeded its budget by £24,704 – however this is offset by £3,185 of additional income
- cost centre 601 has exceeded its budget by £5,967 – however this is offset by £3,953 of additional income

I discussed these with the RFO and Clerk and was advised the council is fully aware of these and that there is regular reporting on current and future cashflows. I am under no doubt council is informed.

FR 4.1. *Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:*

- *the council for all items over £10,000;*
- *a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £5,000; or*
- *the Clerk, for any items below £5,000*

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

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

FR 4.2. *No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').*

E. INCOME

Internal audit requirement

Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

Tested at 30-09-23 – no further testing required.

F. PETTY CASH

Internal audit requirement

Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

Tested at 30-09-23 – no further testing required.

G. PAYROLL

Internal audit requirement

Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

Audit findings

Tested at 30-09-23 – no further testing required.

H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS

Internal audit requirement

Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

Audit findings

Per regulation 13.6. *The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.*

The council has a simple fixed asset register in place which includes details of assets, the category of each asset. Items are correctly included at original or proxy cost.

The council has a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan, confirmation of the repayments and year-end balances will be checked at the year-end audit.

I. BANK AND CASH

Internal audit requirement

Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

Audit findings

Financial regulation 2.2 states "On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Full Council."

Bank reconciliations are completed on a monthly basis, independently checked and presented to council meetings for review. I reviewed the reconciliations presented for the interim audit. I noted evidence of internal council sign off and review.

As the council's budget exceeds €500,000, it does not benefit from protection from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). The council does however have an investment strategy and is in the process of updating this.

It is clear the council carefully considers its banking arrangements.

J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

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.

To be tested again at the final audit

K. LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW

Internal audit requirement

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")

Audit findings

The council did not certify itself exempt in 2022/23 due to exceeding the income and expenditure limits and this test does not apply.

L: PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

Internal audit requirement

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

Audit findings

To be tested again at the final audit

M: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

The authority, during the previous year (2022-23) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set

Audit findings

To be tested again at the final audit

N: PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Internal audit requirement

The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website / webpage.

Before 1 July 2023 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 2022/23, approved and signed, page 4*
- *Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23, approved and signed, page 5*

Not later than 30 September 2023 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.

Audit findings

To be tested again at the final audit

O. TRUSTEESHIP

Internal audit requirement

Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

Audit findings

The council has no trusts, and this test does not apply.

Achievement of control assertions at interim audit date

Based on the tests conducted during the interim audit, our conclusions on the achievement of the internal control objectives are summarised in the table below. A further review and update of this opinion will be conducted at the final audit.

	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 assesses the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these	✓		
D	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for	✓		
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for	✓		
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K	If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			✓
L	The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements	✓		
M	The authority, during the previous year (2022-23) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	✓		
N	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR.	✓		
O	Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Mark Mulberry
For Mulberry & Co

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 29/02/2024

Month No: 11

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
101 Corporate Management								
1010 Other Income	0	275,000	60	(274,940)			458333.	275,000
Corporate Management :- Income	0	275,000	60	(274,940)			458333.	275,000
4088 Newsletter	983	6,629	5,948	(681)	1,417	(2,098)	135.3%	
4101 Bank Charges	18	560	478	(82)		(82)	117.3%	
4111 Professional Fees	177	13,103	31,569	18,466	1,410	17,056	46.0%	
4112 Audit Fees	128	3,126	3,800	674		674	82.3%	
4117 David Whitmarsh Award	0	0	60	60		60	0.0%	
Corporate Management :- Indirect Expenditure	1,304	23,419	41,855	18,436	2,827	15,609	62.7%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(1,304)	251,581	(41,795)	(293,376)				
6001 less Transfer to EMR	0	275,000						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(1,304)	(23,419)						
102 Democratic Representation								
1010 Other Income	0	42	0	(42)			0.0%	
Democratic Representation :- Income	0	42	0	(42)				0
4121 Mayors Allowance	996	4,000	4,000	0		0	100.0%	
4122 Election costs	0	4,389	24,000	19,611		19,611	18.3%	
4124 Public Consultations	0	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4125 Councillor Expenses	70	528	1,200	672		672	44.0%	
Democratic Representation :- Indirect Expenditure	1,065	8,918	31,200	22,282	0	22,282	28.6%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(1,065)	(8,875)	(31,200)	(22,325)				
105 Central Support-Admin Costs								
1010 Other Income	0	984	0	(984)			0.0%	
Central Support-Admin Costs :- Income	0	984	0	(984)				0
4001 Salaries	18,361	233,677	250,627	16,950		16,950	93.2%	
4002 Employers NI	1,949	25,569	25,564	(5)		(5)	100.0%	
4003 Employers Pension	3,185	46,191	53,634	7,443		7,443	86.1%	
4005 Pension Enhancements	0	561	1,022	461		461	54.9%	
4008 Staff Training	87	1,427	3,200	1,773		1,773	44.6%	
4009 Staff Travel & Welfare	4	473	800	327		327	59.2%	
4026 Other Expenditure	(822)	1,652	2,500	848		848	66.1%	
4071 Telephone and IT	922	11,061	20,597	9,536		9,536	53.7%	
4072 Mobile Phones	254	2,284	2,555	271		271	89.4%	
4075 Stationery & Printing	75	1,744	1,750	6		6	99.7%	

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 29/02/2024

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	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4076 Postage	0	961	1,103	142		142	87.2%	
4080 Subscriptions & Publications	0	2,669	3,150	481		481	84.7%	
4085 Insurance	0	23,821	22,350	(1,471)		(1,471)	106.6%	
4087 Advertising	0	783	650	(133)		(133)	120.4%	
4155 Equipment	0	392	2,000	1,608		1,608	19.6%	
4157 Furniture	0	1,071	1,000	(71)		(71)	107.1%	
Central Support-Admin Costs :- Indirect Expenditure	24,015	354,336	392,502	38,166	0	38,166	90.3%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(24,015)	(353,352)	(392,502)	(39,150)				
106 Central Support-Town Hall								
1002 Shop Rents	330	4,209	3,960	(249)			106.3%	
1010 Other Income	0	40	0	(40)			0.0%	
Central Support-Town Hall :- Income	330	4,248	3,960	(288)			107.3%	0
4021 Rates	589	6,484	7,076	592		592	91.6%	
4022 Water Charges	34	421	712	291		291	59.1%	
4024 Gas	702	2,319	2,320	1		1	99.9%	
4025 Electricity	705	3,603	3,147	(456)		(456)	114.5%	
4030 Cleaning	160	1,880	2,011	131		131	93.5%	
4140 Building Maintenance	128	4,596	56,000	51,404	1,964	49,440	11.7%	
Central Support-Town Hall :- Indirect Expenditure	2,320	19,303	71,266	51,963	1,964	49,999	29.8%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(1,990)	(15,055)	(67,306)	(52,251)				
107 Operating Income & Exp.								
1005 Market Income	1,000	11,000	13,200	2,200			83.3%	
1081 CIL	0	338,212	0	(338,212)			0.0%	338,212
1176 Precept	0	826,979	826,979	0			100.0%	47,573
1190 Interest Received	8,207	68,266	25,932	(42,334)			263.2%	60,059
Operating Income & Exp. :- Income	9,207	1,244,457	866,111	(378,346)			143.7%	445,844
Net Income	9,207	1,244,457	866,111	(378,346)				
6001 less Transfer to EMR	445,844	445,844						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(436,637)	798,613						
108 Other Properties								
1001 Rents	0	12,000	12,000	0			100.0%	
Other Properties :- Income	0	12,000	12,000	0			100.0%	0
4140 Building Maintenance	0	1,189	0	(1,189)		(1,189)	0.0%	

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	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4411 Buildings Maintenance Tannery	0	1,776	2,000	224		224	88.8%	
4412 Public Works Loan Board repay	0	9,411	9,411	0		0	100.0%	
Other Properties :- Indirect Expenditure	0	12,376	11,411	(965)	0	(965)	108.5%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	0	(376)	589	965				
201 Anstey Park								
1000 Fees and Charges	2,323	16,315	18,818	2,503			86.7%	
1001 Rents	1,908	39,331	61,445	22,114			64.0%	
1010 Other Income	0	625	0	(625)			0.0%	
1016 Alton FC Holding Funds	0	22,116	22,116	0			100.0%	22,116
Anstey Park :- Income	4,232	78,387	102,379	23,992			76.6%	22,116
4021 Rates	135	1,627	1,550	(77)		(77)	104.9%	
4022 Water Charges	24	701	1,911	1,210		1,210	36.7%	
4024 Gas	470	2,292	2,612	320		320	87.8%	
4025 Electricity	952	8,039	9,261	1,222		1,222	86.8%	
4030 Cleaning	854	9,435	8,320	(1,115)		(1,115)	113.4%	
4071 Telephone and IT	52	582	557	(25)		(25)	104.4%	
4140 Building Maintenance	2,208	8,601	8,000	(601)		(601)	107.5%	
4141 Grounds Maintenance	95	7,051	7,000	(51)	750	(801)	111.4%	
Anstey Park :- Indirect Expenditure	4,789	38,329	39,211	882	750	132	99.7%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(557)	40,058	63,168	23,110				
6001 less Transfer to EMR	0	22,116						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(557)	17,942						
202 Jubilee Playing Fields								
1000 Fees and Charges	2,018	18,713	14,574	(4,139)			128.4%	
1001 Rents	1,715	18,587	20,386	1,799			91.2%	
1010 Other Income	1,923	4,807	0	(4,807)			0.0%	
Jubilee Playing Fields :- Income	5,655	42,107	34,960	(7,147)			120.4%	0
4021 Rates	174	1,905	2,231	326		326	85.4%	
4022 Water Charges	25	201	2,520	2,319		2,319	8.0%	
4025 Electricity	568	4,923	4,646	(277)		(277)	106.0%	
4071 Telephone and IT	14	141	180	39		39	78.6%	
4140 Building Maintenance	484	4,010	4,500	490		490	89.1%	
4141 Grounds Maintenance	11,030	22,048	8,111	(13,937)	978	(14,915)	283.9%	8,000
4143 Skatepark Maintenance	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4150 Fuel Costs	0	1,109	1,486	377		377	74.6%	
Jubilee Playing Fields :- Indirect Expenditure	12,295	34,338	24,174	(10,164)	978	(11,141)	146.1%	8,000
Net Income over Expenditure	(6,640)	7,769	10,786	3,017				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	8,000	8,000						

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	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	1,360	15,769						
301 Grounds Maintenance Team								
1010 Other Income	331	5,764	0	(5,764)			0.0%	
Grounds Maintenance Team :- Income	331	5,764	0	(5,764)				0
4001 Salaries	11,621	127,543	134,396	6,853		6,853	94.9%	
4002 Employers NI	762	9,946	13,708	3,762		3,762	72.6%	
4003 Employers Pension	1,952	21,688	28,761	7,073		7,073	75.4%	
4010 Uniforms	0	388	500	112		112	77.6%	
4031 Refuse Collection	1,320	16,721	20,246	3,525		3,525	82.6%	
4139 Pot holes/Roadway resurfacing	0	22,608	55,000	32,392		32,392	41.1%	
4141 Grounds Maintenance	173	6,997	5,250	(1,747)		(1,747)	133.3%	
4144 Play Equipment Inspections	350	9,340	14,007	4,667		4,667	66.7%	
4145 Tree Maintenance	5,178	9,582	20,000	10,418	4,884	5,534	72.3%	
4146 Bedding Plants	0	1,223	1,198	(25)		(25)	102.1%	
4147 Dog Bins	433	1,700	1,351	(349)		(349)	125.8%	
4148 Play Equipment Maintenance	2,770	25,686	25,000	(686)		(686)	102.7%	
4149 Vehicle Costs	0	2,044	6,398	4,354		4,354	31.9%	
4150 Fuel Costs	216	5,518	8,944	3,426		3,426	61.7%	
4153 Locking & Unlocking	0	6,944	10,920	3,976		3,976	63.6%	
4155 Equipment	1,777	25,162	10,000	(15,162)		(15,162)	251.6%	
Grounds Maintenance Team :- Indirect Expenditure	26,551	293,088	355,679	62,591	4,884	57,707	83.8%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(26,220)	(287,325)	(355,679)	(68,354)				
310 The Butts								
1000 Fees and Charges	0	2,210	2,200	(10)			100.5%	
The Butts :- Income	0	2,210	2,200	(10)			100.5%	0
4022 Water Charges	0	0	53	53		53	0.0%	
The Butts :- Indirect Expenditure	0	0	53	53	0	53	0.0%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	0	2,210	2,147	(63)				
311 Public Gardens								
1001 Rents	599	13,619	15,022	1,403			90.7%	
Public Gardens :- Income	599	13,619	15,022	1,403			90.7%	0
4022 Water Charges	0	1,513	216	(1,297)		(1,297)	700.6%	
4025 Electricity	719	4,120	1,719	(2,401)		(2,401)	239.7%	
4140 Building Maintenance	0	578	1,260	682		682	45.8%	

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	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4141 Grounds Maintenance	0	4,141	2,888	(1,253)		(1,253)	143.4%	
Public Gardens :- Indirect Expenditure	719	10,352	6,083	(4,269)	0	(4,269)	170.2%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(120)	3,267	8,939	5,672				
<u>312 Windmill Hill</u>								
1001 Rents	0	4,425	4,400	(25)			100.6%	
1010 Other Income	1,000	1,000	0	(1,000)			0.0%	
Windmill Hill :- Income	1,000	5,425	4,400	(1,025)			123.3%	0
Net Income	1,000	5,425	4,400	(1,025)				
<u>313 Kings Pond</u>								
1001 Rents	577	6,623	7,100	477			93.3%	
Kings Pond :- Income	577	6,623	7,100	477			93.3%	0
4141 Grounds Maintenance	0	12,585	34,000	21,415	7,613	13,803	59.4%	11,100
Kings Pond :- Indirect Expenditure	0	12,585	34,000	21,415	7,613	13,803	59.4%	11,100
Net Income over Expenditure	577	(5,962)	(26,900)	(20,938)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	0	11,100						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	577	5,138						
<u>314 Holybourne Play Area</u>								
4200 Ground Rent	0	265	265	0		0	100.0%	
Holybourne Play Area :- Indirect Expenditure	0	265	265	0	0	0	100.0%	0
Net Expenditure	0	(265)	(265)	0				
<u>315 Chawton Park Road</u>								
1001 Rents	0	20,900	27,150	6,250			77.0%	
Chawton Park Road :- Income	0	20,900	27,150	6,250			77.0%	0
Net Income	0	20,900	27,150	6,250				
<u>316 Greenfields</u>								
1001 Rents	0	500	500	0			100.0%	
Greenfields :- Income	0	500	500	0			100.0%	0
Net Income	0	500	500	0				

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	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
317 Flood Meadows								
4025 Electricity	114	564	480	(84)		(84)	117.4%	
4141 Grounds Maintenance	185	40,357	42,000	1,643		1,643	96.1%	40,000
Flood Meadows :- Indirect Expenditure	299	40,921	42,480	1,559	0	1,559	96.3%	40,000
Net Expenditure	(299)	(40,921)	(42,480)	(1,559)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	0	40,000						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(299)	(921)						
318 Other Open Spaces								
4156 Parish Paths	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4179 Lower Field Will Hall Farm	0	43,859	50,000	6,141		6,141	87.7%	43,759
4315 Wey Walk	0	175	0	(175)		(175)	0.0%	
Other Open Spaces :- Indirect Expenditure	0	44,034	51,000	6,966	0	6,966	86.3%	43,759
Net Expenditure	0	(44,034)	(51,000)	(6,966)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	0	43,759						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	0	(275)						
319 Closed Churchyard								
1010 Other Income	0	17,059	0	(17,059)			0.0%	
Closed Churchyard :- Income	0	17,059	0	(17,059)				0
4141 Grounds Maintenance	0	17,059	0	(17,059)		(17,059)	0.0%	
Closed Churchyard :- Indirect Expenditure	0	17,059	0	(17,059)	0	(17,059)		0
Net Income over Expenditure	0	0	0	0				
320 Allotments								
1001 Rents	(4,655)	8,903	7,050	(1,853)			126.3%	
1003 Allotment affiliation fees	30	1,092	200	(892)			546.0%	
1010 Other Income	0	5	0	(5)			0.0%	
1080 Grant Income	0	4,490	0	(4,490)			0.0%	
Allotments :- Income	(4,625)	14,490	7,250	(7,240)			199.9%	0
4022 Water Charges	0	1,269	1,750	481		481	72.5%	
4033 Allotment affiliation fees	0	24	0	(24)		(24)	0.0%	
4141 Grounds Maintenance	7	5,419	2,500	(2,919)		(2,919)	216.8%	
4159 Allotment Improvements	0	2,280	0	(2,280)	2,175	(4,455)	0.0%	
Allotments :- Indirect Expenditure	7	8,992	4,250	(4,742)	2,175	(6,917)	262.8%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(4,632)	5,498	3,000	(2,498)				

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	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
321 Barley Fields								
1010 Other Income	0	650	0	(650)			0.0%	
Barley Fields :- Income	<u>0</u>	<u>650</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(650)</u>				<u>0</u>
4141 Grounds Maintenance	0	2,440	0	(2,440)		(2,440)	0.0%	
Barley Fields :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>2,440</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(2,440)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(2,440)</u>		<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>(1,790)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,790</u>				
401 Community								
1010 Other Income	0	0	525	525			0.0%	
1014 Other Events Income	140	5,258	3,000	(2,258)			175.3%	
1072 Donations/Sponsorship Received	159	6,010	5,000	(1,010)			120.2%	
1075 Town Crier Donations	0	20	0	(20)			0.0%	
1080 Grant Income	0	3,301	1,000	(2,301)			330.1%	
Community :- Income	<u>299</u>	<u>14,589</u>	<u>9,525</u>	<u>(5,064)</u>			<u>153.2%</u>	<u>0</u>
4304 Town Crier	0	1,200	1,200	0		0	100.0%	
4305 3rd Party Event Costs	0	1,003	1,500	497		497	66.9%	
4306 Tourism	(18,620)	11,999	12,000	1	1,969	(1,968)	116.4%	
4307 Town Centre Events	1,263	22,144	18,000	(4,144)		(4,144)	123.0%	
4308 Youth Expenditure	0	20,000	20,000	0		0	100.0%	
4312 Events Grants	0	3,584	4,000	416		416	89.6%	
4314 CCTV	0	5,278	2,848	(2,430)		(2,430)	185.3%	
4317 Climate Change Actions/Strateg	0	11,615	17,472	5,857		5,857	66.5%	
Community :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>(17,358)</u>	<u>76,824</u>	<u>77,020</u>	<u>196</u>	<u>1,969</u>	<u>(1,773)</u>	<u>102.3%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>17,657</u>	<u>(62,235)</u>	<u>(67,495)</u>	<u>(5,260)</u>				
403 Christmas Lights								
4300 Christmas Lights	2,504	28,677	21,000	(7,677)		(7,677)	136.6%	
Christmas Lights :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>2,504</u>	<u>28,677</u>	<u>21,000</u>	<u>(7,677)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(7,677)</u>	<u>136.6%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>(2,504)</u>	<u>(28,677)</u>	<u>(21,000)</u>	<u>7,677</u>				
404 Alton in Bloom								
1070 Alton in Bloom-Income	0	0	500	500			0.0%	
Alton in Bloom :- Income	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>500</u>			<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
4302 Alton in Bloom Expenditure	0	1,156	1,500	344	917	(573)	138.2%	
Alton in Bloom :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>1,156</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>344</u>	<u>917</u>	<u>(573)</u>	<u>138.2%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>(1,156)</u>	<u>(1,000)</u>	<u>156</u>				

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420 Grants								
4500 Grants-Empowered	0	30,000	30,000	0		0	100.0%	
Grants :- Indirect Expenditure	0	30,000	30,000	0	0	0	100.0%	0
Net Expenditure	0	(30,000)	(30,000)	0				
503 Assembly Rooms								
1000 Fees and Charges	(2,997)	28,328	26,481	(1,847)			107.0%	
1001 Rents	1,010	10,810	12,514	1,704			86.4%	
1009 Insurance Payout	3,068	3,068	0	(3,068)			0.0%	
Assembly Rooms :- Income	1,081	42,206	38,995	(3,211)			108.2%	0
4006 Management contract	8,000	17,555	22,840	5,285		5,285	76.9%	
4021 Rates	7	4,312	6,808	2,496		2,496	63.3%	
4022 Water Charges	53	549	972	423		423	56.5%	
4024 Gas	808	2,653	3,508	855		855	75.6%	
4025 Electricity	0	5,984	7,246	1,262		1,262	82.6%	
4026 Other Expenditure	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4030 Cleaning	0	5,416	3,250	(2,166)		(2,166)	166.6%	
4031 Refuse Collection	59	582	584	2		2	99.6%	
4040 Licences	0	912	750	(162)		(162)	121.6%	
4071 Telephone and IT	61	500	618	118		118	81.0%	
4087 Advertising	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4140 Building Maintenance	145	39,133	17,000	(22,133)	11,186	(33,320)	296.0%	12,590
4155 Equipment	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4157 Furniture	0	0	800	800		800	0.0%	
Assembly Rooms :- Indirect Expenditure	9,133	77,597	66,376	(11,221)	11,186	(22,407)	133.8%	12,590
Net Income over Expenditure	(8,052)	(35,390)	(27,381)	8,009				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	0	12,590						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(8,052)	(22,800)						
601 Street Furniture								
1008 Bus shelter adverts income	780	6,268	1,500	(4,768)			417.8%	
1072 Donations/Sponsorship Received	2,528	2,993	500	(2,493)			598.6%	
Street Furniture :- Income	3,308	9,261	2,000	(7,261)			463.0%	0
4021 Rates	91	1,007	1,258	251		251	80.0%	
4600 Public Seats/Bins	(2,160)	1,525	1,750	225		225	87.1%	
4601 Bus Shelters	0	662	1,750	1,089		1,089	37.8%	
4602 Notice Boards/street furniture	1,008	7,880	1,500	(6,380)		(6,380)	525.4%	
Street Furniture :- Indirect Expenditure	(1,061)	11,073	6,258	(4,815)	0	(4,815)	176.9%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	4,369	(1,813)	(4,258)	(2,445)				

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 29/02/2024

Month No: 11

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
602 Neighbourhood Plan								
1080 Grant Income	3,600	16,100	35,000	18,900			46.0%	
Neighbourhood Plan :- Income	<u>3,600</u>	<u>16,100</u>	<u>35,000</u>	<u>18,900</u>			<u>46.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
4026 Other Expenditure	9,243	28,480	35,000	6,520		6,520	81.4%	38,900
Neighbourhood Plan :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>9,243</u>	<u>28,480</u>	<u>35,000</u>	<u>6,520</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,520</u>	<u>81.4%</u>	<u>38,900</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(5,643)</u>	<u>(12,380)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12,380</u>				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	38,900	38,900						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>33,257</u>	<u>26,520</u>						
702 Projects								
1080 Grant Income	51,907	51,907	0	(51,907)			0.0%	
1085 Developer Contributions/S106	0	0	538,000	538,000			0.0%	
Projects :- Income	<u>51,907</u>	<u>51,907</u>	<u>538,000</u>	<u>486,093</u>			<u>9.6%</u>	<u>0</u>
4401 Jubilee Playing Fields	0	0	288,000	288,000		288,000	0.0%	
4404 Environmental Improvements	0	0	250,000	250,000		250,000	0.0%	
4414 Grow Up Fund	5,628	5,628	0	(5,628)		(5,628)	0.0%	
4415 Jane Austen Garden	46,705	46,705	0	(46,705)		(46,705)	0.0%	
4416 DFA Assembly Room Refurbishmen	24,420	24,420	0	(24,420)		(24,420)	0.0%	50,380
Projects :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>76,753</u>	<u>76,753</u>	<u>538,000</u>	<u>461,247</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>461,247</u>	<u>14.3%</u>	<u>50,380</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(24,847)</u>	<u>(24,847)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>24,847</u>				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	50,380	50,380						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>25,533</u>	<u>25,533</u>						
Grand Totals:- Income	77,501	1,878,527	1,707,112	(171,415)			110.0%	
Expenditure	152,578	1,251,316	1,880,583	629,267	35,262	594,005	68.4%	
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(75,078)</u>	<u>627,212</u>	<u>(173,471)</u>	<u>(800,683)</u>				
plus Transfer from EMR	97,280	204,729						
less Transfer to EMR	445,844	742,960						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(423,641)</u>	<u>88,982</u>						

East Hampshire District Council Report

Requested by and for Alton Town Council for Full Council meeting on Wednesday 6th March. Report written by Councillor Young (Alton Westbrooke)

Submitted 27th February 2024.

Planning:

- a. Emerging Local Plan is open to public consultation until 4th March "Reg 18 - Part 2; Revised Draft Local Plan". The ambition is for the new Local Plan to be adopted in late 2025.

Waste collection

- a. 2023 was the first year of a standalone East Hampshire and Norse waste collection agreement, without Havant as an additional party. The service is still not performing well. There are various problems with the age of the fleet and still a driver shortage - a hangover from Covid.

A new contract is being negotiated for the coming year with Norse. When fees were increased (approved at Full Council in November last year) for many EHDC services, Richard Millard - the EHDC Council Leader - pledged improved waste collection services for residents across all waste collection in 2024.

- b. (Alton Westbrooke) I have received complaints about overflowing commercial bins or waste bags dumped in the vicinity of commercial waste bins in various EHDC car parks in the town centre. These commercial bins are collected through private contracts, although they are placed on EHDC car park land. I have spoken to some local businesses about putting locks on their bins, although there was some reluctance to do so. Businesses report that often members of the public are leaving their waste near commercial bins for collection. I have asked the EHDC officers to investigate how this situation can be resolved. Please may I ask ATC's support for continuing to monitor and share information about this situation - particularly if any further health and safety concerns arise (vermin, hazardous waste etc.), which could help to escalate the issue.
- c. (Alton Westbrooke) Last year I received several complaints about the cleanliness of the Lady Place car park toilets and escalated this to the EHDC officer who manages car parks, as well as the council Leader. I requested that the furniture is replaced as the officer had told me that some of it was over 30 years old. In November, Tony Constigan reported that some of the furniture has been replaced. Please continue to encourage reporting of any issues with the cleanliness of public toilets (again this is dealt with under the Norse contract).

Grants

- a. EHDC Councillor grant window ends at the end of February 2024. Most, if not all Alton Councillors have now allocated 100% of their allowance to support some fantastic local initiatives.
- b. For 2024/2025, there is a proposal to reduce the Councillor Grant scheme from £4,500 to £3,500 per councillor. The £1000 difference represents the section of the grant previously reserved for “environmental” causes. The current proposal is that this £1000 per councillor will be pooled in a central pot and allocated from there. The pot access mechanism is unclear and clarity is being sought before the proposal is ratified in the budget meeting on Thursday 29th February.
- c. The EHDC Councillor grant scheme will re-open in April 2024, please could I thank and ask for EHDC’s continued support with publicising it to local organisations.

Budget Meeting on 29th February

- a. Proposed budget is available to view on the EHDC website. Full Council meeting to review the budget is scheduled for Thursday 29th February.