

Dunstable Town Council

Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1NF

PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING

Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

Monday, 7 September 2026

Dear All,

Notice is hereby given of a public meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee to be held at 7:00 PM on Monday, 14 September 2026 in the Council Chamber, Grove House, 76 High Street North.

To view the meeting live or afterwards use this link: [livestream](#). Members of the public and press are also welcome to attend in person. Members of the public may ask a question during the public session, either in person or online via MS Teams. To submit a question, please contact the Council at democratic@dunstable.gov.uk or call 01582 513000 by 4 pm on the Friday immediately before the meeting.

This meeting will be filmed, livestreamed and will be made available for repeated public viewing. If you are seated in the Council Chamber it is likely that the cameras will capture your image. By your presence you are deemed to consent to be filmed, and to the use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting or training purposes.

If you address the committee in person or via Teams, your contribution will be recorded and broadcast, unless this is during a private session, as permitted by the Access to Information provisions.



Paul Hodson

Town Clerk and Chief Executive to Dunstable Town Council

Apologies for Absence

1. Declarations of Interest

2. Public Question Time

3. To agree the minutes of the meeting of 8 June and 17 August 2026 as an accurate record

4. To receive the minutes of the Meetings of Plans Sub-Committee meetings held on 8 June, 29 June, 20 July and 10 August 2026

5. Action Tracker

To receive updates on previous actions

6. Parks and Recreation Grounds, Cemetery, Allotments, Town Centre Gardens and Rangers Services

7. Corporate Plan Update Report

8. Play Area Refurbishment Prioritisation Programme Overview Report

9. Reports from Outside Organisations

CBC Development Committee – Councillor Nicholas Kotarski

Friends of Priory House & Gardens - Councillor Nicholas Kotarski

10. Exclusion of Public and Press

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

11. Removal of Unauthorised Memorial at Dunstable Cemetery (*Exempt*)

12. Date of the Next Meeting

Monday 16 November at 7 pm

APPENDIX I — Public Documents

3. To agree the minutes of the meeting of 8 June and 17 August 2026 as an accurate record

GES Minutes - 8 June 2026 (1).pdf

GES Extraordinary Minutes - 17 August 2026 (1).pdf

4. To receive the minutes of the Meetings of Plans Sub-Committee meetings held on 8 June, 29 June, 20 July and 10 August 2026

Plans Minutes - 8 June (1).pdf

Plans Minutes - 29 June (1).pdf

Plans Minutes - 20 July (1).pdf

Plans Minutes - 10 August.pdf

5. Action Tracker

action + subject tracker (1).pdf

6. Parks and Recreation Grounds, Cemetery, Allotments, Town Centre Gardens and Rangers Services

6. Parks and Recreation Grounds, Cemetery, Allotments, Town Centre Gardens and Rangers Services.pdf

7. Corporate Plan Update Report

7. Corporate Plan Update Report (GES).pdf

Appendix 1 Corporate Plan Objectives - Grounds and Environmental Services.pdf

Appendix 2 Corporate Plan Key Objectives Grounds and Environmental Services.pdf

8. Play Area Refurbishment Prioritisation Programme Overview Report

play areas overview report.pdf

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 8 JUNE 2026 FROM 7 PM

Present: Councillors Richard Attwell (Town Mayor), Robert Blennerhassett (Deputy Town Mayor), Michelle Henderson (Chair), Nicholas Kotarski (Vice-Chair), Matthew Brennan, Sally Kimondo, Shaun Moulster and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Jane Conway (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Katherine Doyle (Parks and Green Space Development Officer) Daniel Mott (Grounds Operations Manager), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager) and James Stenson (Cemetery Manager)

In Attendance

Remotely: Councillors John Gurney and Peter Hollick

Public: Nil

171/26 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors Trevor Adams, Wendy Bater, John Gurney and Peter Hollick

172/26 – Specific Declarations of Interest

There were no specific declarations of interest.

173/26 - Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

174/26 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the meeting of the Grounds & Environmental Services Committee held on Monday 9 March 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

175/26 - To receive the minutes of the Meetings of Plans Sub-Committee meetings held on 16 March, 13 April and 11 May 2026.

RESOLVED: that the minutes from the Plans Sub-Committee meetings held on 16 March, 13 April and 11 May 2026 be received

176/26 - Action Tracker

Councillor Tamara entered the chamber at 7.04 pm

Members were informed that the CCTV camera within Priory Gardens was running and in use.

Members discussed the cleanliness of the town centre pavements. Officers undertook to review options for carrying out a jet washing programme.

ACTION: Head of Grounds and Environmental Services and Grounds Operations Manager

177/26 - Brewers Hill and Downs Road Recreation Grounds Management Plans

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report which Members discussed in detail.

Members expressed concern that no clear timetable had been provided for renewing play areas. They asked for a more transparent priority order based on condition, usage and community need, rather than investment being directed to sites already performing well. Particular concern was raised about French's Avenue, which was considered to be in poor condition and in urgent need of improvement.

Members noted that play equipment was subject to regular inspections, including quarterly independent inspections, an annual insurance inspection, and ongoing visual checks. Grass cutting and general maintenance operated on a performance-based approach, ensuring areas were maintained to an acceptable standard.

It was agreed that officers would provide details of the full likely cost of renewing and replacing the Council's play areas in the next ten years. This would be provided to the Committee later in 2026.

Action: Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED: that the draft management plans for Brewers Hill and Downs Road Recreation Grounds be adopted.

178/26 - Ear Marked Reserves

The committee received a recommendation to approve the release of Grounds and Environmental Services specific ear-marked reserves for expenditure due to be incurred specifically for their purpose.

Reserve	Balance at 30/04/2026 (excluding commitments)	Detail

331 – Tree Reserve	£24,861	For ongoing annual surveys / inspections and subsequent essential works
344 – Fencing Reserve	£14,088	For essential replacement and repair works

Members discussed the recommendation and the role of ear-marked reserves. It was noted that the Community Services Committee had approved a similar recommendation, but Members of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee had reservations in providing a blanket spending approval.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED: that the matter be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for further consideration.

179/26 - Parks and Recreation Grounds, Cemetery, Allotments, Town Centre Gardens and Rangers Services

The Grounds Operations Manager, Cemetery Manager and Parks and Green Space Development Officer summarised the report.

Members were informed that judging for Anglia in Bloom would take place on 22 July 2026 and Britain in Bloom would be 3 August 2026. Preparations were progressing well with the production of a submission portfolio and promotional film underway.

Members noted that Dunstable in Bloom had been shortlisted for the Environmental Award at the BBC Three Counties Make a Difference Awards.

180/26 - Reports from Outside Organisations

Central Bedfordshire Council (Development Committee)

Members noted that there had been no significant updates arising from recent meetings.

Friends of Priory House and Gardens

The AGM had been conducted in a straightforward manner. A presentation was delivered on community engagement and partnership working, highlighting the contribution of local groups to the town. The organisation continues to focus on fundraising and community involvement.

181/26 - Motion to exclude public and press

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following item would be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and

contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

182/26 - Vehicle Replacement Programme and Spending Approval

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report to members. The report was discussed in detail.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED:

1.1. to authorise the release of an additional £75,000 from the Vehicle and Equipment Reserve for the purchase of a replacement Ride on Mower and Cemetery Digger.

1.2. to approve the reallocation of £35,000 from the same budget towards the purchase of a replacement ride-on mower and a new digger for the Cemetery. The previously approved £15,000 allocation for refurbishment of the existing cemetery to also be redirected towards the cost of replacing the digger.

183/26 - Removal of Unauthorised Memorial at Dunstable Cemetery

The Committee received a report summarised by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED: to defer the matter to Full Council for decision.

184/26 - New Cemetery Development Progress Update

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED: to approve the release of £12,725 from earmarked reserves towards the cost of the new cemetery development work.

185/26 - Date of the next meeting – Monday 5 October 2026 at 7 pm

The meeting closed at 9.37 pm.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 17 AUGUST 2026 FROM 7:10 PM

Present: Councillors Richard Attwell (Town Mayor) Michelle Henderson (Chair), Nicholas Kotarski (Vice-Chair), Wendy Bater, Matthew Brennan, Sally Kimondo, Shaun Moulster and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: Jane Conway (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager) and Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services and RFO)

In Attendance

Remotely: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive)

Public: 18

Due to the high level of public attendance, the Chair held an informal session at 7.00 pm to outline the meeting procedures and explain the process to members of the public. The formal meeting commenced at 7.10 pm.

218/26 - Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

219/26 – Specific Declarations of Interest

All Committee Members are residents of Dunstable Parish

220/26 - Public Question Time

During Public Question Time, residents raised concerns regarding the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan consultation and the potential development sites identified in and around Dunstable. Questions focused on whether additional brownfield sites could be prioritised for housing development before considering greenfield land, and how residents can access information about such sites. Concerns were also expressed about the cumulative impact of further development on local infrastructure, including traffic congestion, road safety, healthcare provision, schools and community need and wellbeing. Councillors explained that the consultation process is at an early stage, with submitted sites being assessed against planning, environmental and infrastructure considerations, and that comments on behalf of Dunstable Town Council would form part of the evidence considered by Central Bedfordshire Council.

Concerns were raised around protection of the greenbelt around the town and significant discussion centred on proposed sites near Dunstable Downs at The Avenue and adjacent agricultural land, with residents highlighting concerns about landscape impact, loss of green

space, biodiversity, public amenity, and the effect on views from the nationally important Chilterns landscape. Additional concerns were raised regarding potential impacts on gliding activities, aviation safety, horse riders, walkers and local wildlife. Officers and councillors clarified Dunstable Town Council role as a consultee in the planning process and confirmed that the sites identified are not yet allocated for development. Submissions through the call for sites process do not guarantee inclusion for development in the final Local Plan. It was confirmed that the Town Council's response would consider factors including highways, healthcare, education, public transport, biodiversity, greenspace, landscape character and the cumulative effects of development, with particular emphasis on the need to prioritise brownfield redevelopment where possible.

221/26 – Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan Submitted Sites Consultation 2026

The Chair waived Standing Orders to allow members of the public to raise questions, make comments, and discuss individual sites as they were presented during the meeting.

Members discussed Central Bedfordshire Council's Submitted Sites Consultation 2026 in detail. Members provided and agreed comments for each of the sites listed which were submitted on Central Bedfordshire Council's website immediately after the meeting.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that members agree the Council's consultation response to each site listed in Central Bedfordshire Council's Submitted Sites Consultation 2026.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that members authorise for the Head of Corporate Services and RFO to submit the agreed response immediately after the meeting.

Site plans and comments for Dunstable submitted sites:

1	Site:	135286
	Ward:	Dunstable Central
	Proposed Use:	Residential
	Comments:	Dunstable Town Council supports residential use of this small urban site in principle. A previous proposal was refused because it overlooked the building to the rear, but the Council would support appropriate residential development that meets Central Bedfordshire Council's planning requirements. Any scheme must properly address overlooking, neighbouring amenity, access, parking, highway safety, design quality and whether the site can provide acceptable residential accommodation. The Council supports making appropriate use of small urban sites where

this reduces pressure for greenfield development, meets housing need and contributes to regeneration objectives and does not create unacceptable local impacts.

2 **Site:** **135338**
 Ward: Dunstable North
Proposed Use: Residential
 Comments: Dunstable Town Council objects to residential development on this site. The former school site was previously allowed by the Secretary of State to be used in part for a synthetic turf pitch as part of Creasey Park. Dunstable North already has the greatest population density in Central Bedfordshire and the cumulative effect of additional residential development would negatively impact the local community. More housing is already being developed nearby at Watling House. The Council considers that the highway and site access are insufficient, and raised concerns related to additional traffic movements.

3 **Site:** **136303**
 Ward: Dunstable West
Proposed Use: Residential
 Comments: Dunstable Town Council objects to this proposed residential site in the strongest possible terms. The site forms part of the green infrastructure network for the town providing access to Dunstable Downs and the Chilterns National Landscape. It contributes to the town's local identity, amenity, landscape character and sense of place. It is extensively used by residents and visitors for recreation. Development would cause unacceptable loss of greenspace, wildlife, landscape character, and would have environmental, biodiversity, highway, infrastructure and safety impacts. The B489 and site access are unsuitable for additional traffic. The Council is also concerned about aviation safety, glider recovery, risk to life and property, impact on habitat, rare corn bunting populations, cumulative loss of green space and development pressure.
Although the 1991 proposal was a different form of development, the planning assessment remains relevant today because it considered the landscape characteristics of the same wider area below Dunstable Downs. The committee report stated that the land below the escarpment was gently undulating, undeveloped and formed part of the setting of a typical Chiltern landscape. It also described the site as visually prominent and sensitive, positioned at the foot of the escarpment and in the foreground of views to the west. The planning authority concluded that local demand for golfing facilities did not outweigh the need to retain the character of this chalk downland landscape. It considered that buildings, car parking, terrain changes, greens, trees,

bunkers and associated features would create an artificial landscape, extend urbanisation along Tring Road and seriously erode the quality of the designated landscape. The application was refused because the proposed development of the exposed site would result in an obtrusive and artificial feature out of character with the established and attractive Chiltern landscape and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. For all of the reasons above this site is considered unsuitable for residential development.

4	Site:	136351
	Ward:	Dunstable North
	Proposed Use:	Residential
	Comments:	Dunstable Town Council notes that this is a small residential site within an established urban area. The Council has not identified a specific objection in the current draft, but any allocation should be supported by evidence that development would be compatible with surrounding uses and would not cause unacceptable harm. Key concerns are appropriate access, parking, highway safety, neighbouring residential amenity, design quality, environmental constraints and the effect on the local street scene. The Council considers that smaller urban sites should normally be assessed before significant greenfield expansion, where this is consistent with planning policy and local impacts can be managed.

5	Site:	136492
	Ward:	Dunstable West
	Proposed Use:	Standalone green space
	Comments:	Dunstable Town Council strongly supports preserving this site as green space. The Council welcomes the identification of land that protects and enhances and buffers Dunstable's existing green infrastructure network and provides clear public, environmental, recreation and wellbeing benefits. The site should be protected from development and managed to support existing biodiversity and greenspace provision enhancing, public accessibility, links to surrounding countryside and neighbourhoods, climate resilience and nature recovery. The Council also notes that the proposed boundary line of this site is inaccurate and should be corrected before any Local Plan allocation is finalised, so the designation properly reflects the land intended for green space protection.

6	Site:	136602
	Ward:	Dunstable South
	Proposed Use:	Residential

Comments: Dunstable Town Council objects to this site being allocated for residential development. The Council considers that there is not enough highway infrastructure to support the proposed use and that additional traffic would place unacceptable pressure on the local network. The Council is also concerned at the potential for loss of existing commercial units and jobs and considers the proposed relationship between residential and industrial uses unacceptable, whether through shared use of the site or directly adjacent residential and industrial development. These conflicts create serious concerns about amenity, compatibility and proper planning. Although the site lies within the urban area and may have redevelopment potential, it should not be allocated for housing on the evidence currently available.

7 **Site:** **135341**
 Ward: Lies within Houghton Regis and directly adjoins the Dunstable boundary.
 Proposed Use: Residential
 Comments: Dunstable Town Council opposes the use of this Houghton Regis site for residential development. Although outside Dunstable parish, it directly adjoins the Dunstable boundary and would affect Dunstable's infrastructure, movement network, services, highway capacity and green infrastructure. The Council considers that there is not enough highway infrastructure to support residential development in this location. The site is also directly adjacent to a nationally significant Scheduled Monument, making the location highly sensitive. For these reasons, the Council considers that residential allocation would be inappropriate and objects to the proposal being taken forward through the Local Plan.

8 **Site:** **136599**
 Ward: Lies within Totternhoe Parish but immediately adjoins the southern boundary of Dunstable.
 Proposed Use: Residential
 Comments: Dunstable Town Council is concerned about residential development on this substantial agricultural site adjoining the southern edge of Dunstable, adjacent to Site 136303. The site raises similar landscape, highway, infrastructure, cumulative growth and safety issues, although it is not currently managed for biodiversity or used as public green access land. Development would affect the setting of Dunstable Downs, the Chilterns and the transition from urban edge to open countryside. Significant concerns relate to strategic highway capacity, services, active travel, public transport and biodiversity could be affected. Glider safety is a particular concern,

with risks to emergency recovery, human life and property.

222/26 - Date of the next meeting – Monday 14 September 2026 at 7 pm

The meeting closed at 9.37 pm.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE, DUNSTABLE
ON MONDAY 8 JUNE AT 6.20 pm

Present: Councillor Richard Attwell (Town Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski, Shaun Moulster and Steve Collins

Present: None
(Remotely)

Apologies: Councillor Wendy Bater

In Attendance: Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

Public: Nil

1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillor Nicholas Kotarski was appointed as Chair and Councillor Richard Attwell (Town Mayor) was appointed as Vice-Chair

2. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No specific declarations of interest were declared

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were put forward ahead of the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF THE PLANS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 MAY 2026

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 11 May 2026 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Sub-Committee considered all planning applications submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of Dunstable since the last meeting of this Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: that the following comments be forwarded to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of the applications indicated

1	CB/26/01489/FULL:	12 Half Moon Lane
	Proposal:	Single storey front extension

	Comments:	No Objection
2	CB/26/01155/FULL: Proposal: Comments:	Unit D, Chiltern Park Industrial Estate, Boscombe Road Single storey side extension with roof lights No Objection
3	CB/26/00760/FULL: Proposal: Comments:	46 Allen Close Installation of air source heat pump to the rear No Objection
4	CB/26/01230/FULL: Proposal: Comments:	226 Jeans Way Conversion of existing conservatory with minor enlargement and addition of 2 velux windows, installation of rear dormer in existing loft conversion with 3 velux windows to front elevation, and replacement of garage door No Objection
5	CB/26/01247/FULL: Proposal: Comments:	52 Bibshall Crescent Erection of a first floor rear/side extension with rooflights, installation of new first floor side window and rooflights to the front No Objection
6	CB/26/01336/FULL: Proposal: Comments:	67 Jeans Way First floor side/rear extension and front rooflight No Objection
7	CB/26/01587/FULL: Proposal: Comments:	178 Chiltern Road Vehicular crossover extension No Objection
8	CB/26/01204/FULL: Proposal: Comments:	54 Maidenbower Avenue Erection of single storey rear, side and front extensions, removal of conservatory, with roof lights No Objection
9	CB/26/01560/FULL: Proposal: Comments:	55B High Street South Conversion of a shop (Class E) to a dwellinghouse (Class C3). Erection of a ground floor rear extension. Alterations to windows and doors. Upgrade drainage and minimal external alterations No Objection – so long as the retail unit is not affected. Clarification as it mentions first floor conversion however the ground floor was shown as conversion within plans.
10	CB/26/01561/FULL: Proposal:	13A Richard Street Conversion of a class E building to class C3 for 1 residential dwelling

Comments:		No Objection
11	CB/26/01367/FULL:	Priory Academy, Britain Street
	Proposal:	Erection of two single storey structures (student gym and SEN classroom) and a shipping container for storage. Retrospective
	Comments:	No Objection
12	CB/26/01428/FULL:	12 Albion Street
	Proposal:	Change of use from offices (use class E) to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for up to 4 persons (use class C4)
	Comments:	Objection – Clarification needs to be made on which rooms are bedrooms and where the communal area will be allocated. 2 shower rooms for 4 bedrooms seems overcrowding.

5. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Sub-Committee noted the decisions of Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of recent planning applications.

6. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

None

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 26 June 2026 at 6.15pm

The meeting closed at 6.48 pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT GROVE HOUSE, DUNSTABLE

ON MONDAY 29 JUNE AT 6.15 pm

Present: Councillor Richard Attwell (Town Mayor and Vice Chair), Wendy Bater, Robert Blennerhassett (Deputy Mayor), Steven Collins and Michelle Henderson

Present: None
(Remotely)

Apologies: Councillors Nicholas Kotarski (Chair) and Shaun Moulster

In Attendance: Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

Public: Nil

1. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No specific declarations of interest were declared

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were put forward ahead of the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PLANS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 JUNE 2026

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 8 June 2026 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Sub-Committee considered all planning applications submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of Dunstable since the last meeting of this Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: that the following comments be forwarded to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of the applications indicated

1	CB/26/01548/FULL:	Unit 4, Frenchs Avenue
	Proposal:	Change of Use from a warehouse (Use Class B8) to a Padel Club (Use Class E(d). Creation of an indoor sports facility comprising three double padel courts, a small coffee/bar area, changing rooms, and toilets all within the existing building envelope
	Comments:	No Objection

2	CB/26/01780/FULL: Proposal:	89 Great Northern Road Single storey rear extension, roof alteration to the first floor rear elevation and loft conversion with front and rear dormers
	Comments:	No Objection

3	CB/26/01648/FULL: Proposal:	48 Seamons Close Conversion of the front garage, changing the doors to a window, construction of a pitched roof with roof lights and infill of a side door
	Comments:	No Objection

5. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Sub-Committee noted the decisions of Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of recent planning applications.

6. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

None

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 20 July 2026 at 6.15 pm

The meeting closed at 6.26 pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE, DUNSTABLE
ON MONDAY 20 JULY AT 6.15 pm

Present: Councillor Richard Attwell (Town Mayor), Robert Blennerhassett (Deputy Town Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski (Chair), Shaun Moulster, Steve Collins Wendy Bater and Michelle Henderson

Present: None
(Remotely)

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Jackie Carrington (Democratic Services Manager)

Public: Nil

1. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No specific declarations of interest were declared

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were put forward ahead of the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PLANS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 June 2026

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 29 June 2026 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Sub-Committee considered all planning applications submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of Dunstable since the last meeting of this Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: that the following comments be forwarded to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of the applications indicated

1	CB/26/01644/FUL:	45 Appleby Gardens,
	Proposal:	New pitched roof and brick-built porch to front elevation, and new lantern skylights to existing flat roof to rear, alterations to windows and doors.
	Comments:	No objection

2	CB/26/01892/ADV: Proposal:	77-87 London Road, Advertisement: 2 replacement and 1 new illuminated fascia signs and 1 freestanding 4.5m internally illuminated totem sign.
	Comments:	No objection
3	CB/26/01611/FULL: Proposal:	37 High Street North, Installation of an (ATM) Automated Teller Machine (Retrospective).
	Comments:	No objection
4	CB/26/01612/ADV: Proposal:	37 High Street North, Advertisement: 2 internally illuminated fascia signs (Retrospective)
	Comments:	No objection
5	CB/26/01621/FULL: Proposal:	7 Sunbower Avenue, Single storey front porch extension.
	Comments:	No objection
6	CB/26/01955/FULL: Proposal:	7 First Avenue, Single storey front extension.
	Comments:	No objection
7	CB/26/01805/FULL: Proposal:	23 High Street North, Change of Use of ground floor licensed pool hall to adult gaming centre.
	Comments:	No objection

5. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Sub-Committee noted the decisions of Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of recent planning applications.

6. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

153-157 High Street North, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU6 1JW
Sale of alcohol (off the Premise) Monday to Sunday from 00:00 to 00:00hrs
Comments: No objection

2 Mayfield Road, Dunstable, LU5 4AP
Supply of alcohol Monday – Saturday 08:00hrs to 23:00hrs and Sunday 08:00hrs to 22:30hrs
Comments: No objection

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 10 August 2026 at 6.15pm

The meeting closed at 6.25 pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE, DUNSTABLE
ON MONDAY 10 AUGUST AT 6.15 pm

Present: Councillor Richard Attwell (Town Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski (Chair), Steve Collins, Wendy Bater and Michelle Henderson

Present: None
(Remotely)

Apologies: Councillor Shaun Moulster

In Attendance: Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

Public: Nil

1. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No specific declarations of interest were declared

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were put forward ahead of the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PLANS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 July 2026

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 20 July 2026 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Sub-Committee considered all planning applications submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of Dunstable since the last meeting of this Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: that the following comments be forwarded to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of the applications indicated

1	CB/26/01549/FULL: Proposal: Comments:	15 Candale Close, Single storey rear extension. No objection
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2	CB/26/02083/FULL: Proposal:	562 Lowther Road, Part single, part two storey rear extension, first floor
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side extension and front porch. Alterations to windows, doors, rooflights and new roof lanterns with rear Juliet balcony and solar panels. Alteration to ground floor roof line.

Comments:

No objection

3	CB/26/02052/LB: Proposal:	13 High Street North, Listed Building internal alterations, removal of internal walls and relocation of the staircase.
	Comments:	As a Grade II* listed building (listing number 1114592) Commercial optimisation does not outweigh heritage harm. To move the staircase will remove and destroy heritage fabric unnecessarily so. The only reason approval could be seen as agreeable would be if there is evidence that this is a modern staircase that was moved into this position and that it is merely being moved back to its original location, and therefore there is no new loss of historic fabric. Whilst the application makes reference to it being reversible, it is unclear how the historic fabric that will be disturbed by the re-location could ever be put back (unless, as just mentioned, it is the case that there was historically a staircase in the 'new' location).

4	CB/26/01503/FULL: Proposal:	21 High Street North, First and second floor rear extensions, loft conversion with rear dormer window, split of existing first and second floor flats currently 2 flats to become 4 flats - loft conversion to create 1 studio flat.
	Comments:	No objection subject to CBC building regulations

5. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Sub-Committee noted the decisions of Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of recent planning applications.

6. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

None Received

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 7 September 2026 at 6.15pm

The meeting closed at 6.24 pm

Committee	Minute	Date	Action	Action Full	Responsible	Update	Status
GES	224/23	11/6/2023	Allotment Land at each recreation ground	To consider opportunities to develop allotment land at each recreation ground as part of the management plan development scheme.	The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services	The process commenced in April 2024 as part of the agreed programme. Consultation outcomes have been presented to Member working groups for further discussion. An area of temporary allotment land adjacent to Downside recreation ground is being considered within the land identified for the future cemetery site	Ongoing
GES	018/25	1/13/2025	CCTV	Members requested that a review be carried out of the use of CCTV across the Council's estate. It was agreed that officers would produce a report for consideration by members at a later meeting.	The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services	This matter will be raised at Joint Committee as an opportunity for Members to raise any specific concerns with partner organisations. Officers will provide a report once investigative work has been completed. An update was given and Cllr Brennan will ask for this item to be added to the Dunstable Joint Committee Priority Setting Agenda	Ongoing
GES	099/26	3/2/2026	Grounds - Information Report	that the £10,000 reserved for toilets be redirected towards installing security fencing at Meadway allotments	The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services	Quotes for palladin fencing being obtained. This is a more appropriate product given the proximity to local properties.. Composting toilets will be proposed for inclusion in the next Corporate Plan.	Complete
GES	176/26	8/6/2026	Action Tracker	Members discussed the cleanliness of the town centre pavements. Officers undertook to review options for carrying out a jet washing programme.	Head of Grounds and Environmental Services and Grounds Operations Manager	Officers investigating costs and solutions. No work will commence until after the hosepipe ban is lifted (anticipated October)	Ongoing
GES	177/26	8/6/2026	Brewers Hill and Downs Road Recreation Grounds Management Plans	It was agreed that officers would provide details of the full likely cost of renewing and replacing the Council's play areas in the next ten years. This would be provided to the Committee later in 2026.	The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services	An initial report is prepared for consideration by Members	Ongoing

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

GROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

**PARKS AND RECREATION GROUNDS, CEMETERY, ALLOTMENTS, TOWN CENTRE
GARDENS AND RANGER SERVICE – INFORMATION REPORT**

Purpose of report: To update the Committee on the management and maintenance of the town's cemetery, allotments, recreation grounds, town gardens, floral displays, play areas and Ranger Service.

1. PARKS AND RECREATION GROUNDS

Lead Officer: Grounds Operations Manager.

- 1.1 Green Flag Awards have been successfully retained for Priory Gardens, Grove House Gardens, Bennett's Memorial Recreation Ground and Dunstable Cemetery, recognising the consistently high standards achieved across all four sites.
- 1.2 Tenders for the proposed Creasey Park grounds welfare facility have been evaluated and a preferred supplier identified. A planning application (CB/26/0240/FULL) has been submitted to CBC planning and validated. A planning decision is expected 12th October 2026. The delivery programme remains dependent on the planning decision and the approved budget for the build.
- 1.3 Summer bedding, baskets, planters and troughs were progressed during July. These contribute greatly to our In Bloom campaign each year.
- 1.4 Sports-pitch goalmouth renovation is now under way. Members should note that pitches have suffered greatly due to the drought conditions and are not currently available for booking until later in September to allow time for the grass to recover. Some over seeding of pitches will be scheduled for October.
- 1.5 The replacement triple mower has been purchased.
- 1.6 Frontline machinery and refresher training continues as part of the service training programme, with a focus on maintaining compliance, operational competence and safe working practices. Current priorities include hedge-cutting, brushcutter, industrial chipper and play inspection training.

2 PLAY AREAS – Inspection and maintenance

- 2.1 The Council commissions quarterly inspections by an external play specialist. Officers continue to review inspection findings and arrange high and medium-priority maintenance works where required. The latest inspection dated 20th August found 8 items of medium risk for attention. No items with high risk were identified. A programme of repairs is being prepared for completion during September.

3 FUTURE CEMETERY PROJECT

Lead Officer: Head of Grounds and Environmental Services.

- 3.1 The new cemetery project remains on track and continues to make good progress. An early pre-planning advice request was sent to Central Bedfordshire Council on 31 July. This is not a planning application and no decision is being sought at this stage. The purpose is to ask planning officers and specialist advisers for their views on the emerging proposals and to identify any issues that may need to be addressed before a planning application is prepared.
- 3.2 The Council's consultants, CDS, have completed the first phase of design work, surveys and technical assessments needed to support the project. Initial designs show how the cemetery could be developed in stages over time, while also allowing for temporary allotments on site. The initial proposed layout could provide around 6,700 burial and ashes plots. Based on recent burial rates, this would provide capacity for approximately 75 to 80 years. These figures are necessarily approximate at this stage!
- 3.3 Surveys completed to help understand the site and identify any issues that need to be considered as the design develops include ecology and wildlife surveys, tree surveys and highway and access assessments. Further work is planned to help inform a detailed design and supporting infrastructure, including additional bat surveys, ground testing, drainage investigations and road construction assessments. Further archaeological investigations are likely to be needed before a planning application can be submitted.
- 3.4 Over the coming months, the project team will:
- Review the feedback from Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - Complete the remaining surveys and technical investigations.
 - Set up a design review meeting with the Member working group.
 - Further develop the cemetery design.
 - Finalise the full planning application.

4 CEMETERY UPDATE

Lead Officer: Cemetery and Allotment Manager.

- 4.1 The June report recorded 315 new full grave spaces remaining in the cemetery extension at the time of writing. In September this figure is 310.

	July 2025 to Sept 2025	July 2026 to Sept 2026
New earth grave burial	8	9
Re open earth grave burial	7	11
New ashes burial	7	6
Re open ashes burial	8	9

- 4.2 Members should note that the numbers of burials for April to August 2026 indicate that income targets set for 2026/27 are unlikely to be achieved. There is some evidence to suggest a trend towards interment of ashes. This is being monitored to inform the review of fees and charges for 2027/28.
- 4.3 An audit of cemetery paths has been completed and quotations are being obtained to support a prioritised patch and repair programme based on condition, accessibility, safety and the available funding from the Cemetery Building Reserve. (£8,246.00)
- 4.4 Seven reports of theft from graves had been received during 2026. Six were reported directly to the Council and one was identified through Facebook. Advice to residents is to report any theft to the police and the Cemetery. The Cemetery reported three incidents to the police. Visitors are advised not to leave items of monetary or significant sentimental value on graves. Tokens and ornaments are left at the owner's risk in accordance with the Council's published cemetery information.
- 4.5 A number of incidents of racist graffiti, chalked on cemetery paths, have also been reported to the police. This is being monitored daily and cleaned off by the cemetery grounds team as soon as it occurs.
- 4.6 Officers continue to monitor reports closely, and to ensure all incidents of criminal activity are reported to the police to support their planning and awareness.
- 4.7 Cemetery mapping work is progressing.
- 4.8 A review of the Cemetery Rules and Regulations is currently being undertaken alongside a revision of the cemetery booklet. This work is intended to provide greater clarity for funeral directors and to ensure that requirements relating to memorials,

cemetery procedures and bereaved families' responsibilities are clearly communicated and understood. A revised Notice of Burial is also being introduced, which will place greater responsibility on funeral directors to undertake residency checks at the point of application, helping to ensure that the correct cemetery fees are applied. The revised documentation is expected to be available for Member approval at the next Grounds and Environmental Services Committee meeting.

4.8 Cemetery Chapel building repairs

- 4.9 Officers have continued to progress the proposed repairs to the Cemetery Chapel. A recent site meeting with the Council's building adviser confirmed that the damp problems are likely to be caused by a combination of factors, including the age of the building, rainwater drainage and previous repair work. Options are being considered to improve the condition of the building and reduce future maintenance issues.
- 4.10 Funding has already been approved for cemetery improvement works, including an estimated £28,000 for damp and guttering repairs to the chapel and office complex. Officers are now obtaining updated quotations and reviewing the scope of works to ensure that available funding is used effectively.
- 4.11 Advice has also been sought from contractors who have previously carried out repairs to the building. Current indications are that, due to the age and construction of the chapel, a planned programme of maintenance is likely to provide better long-term value than a series of reactive repairs. Officers will continue to review options and will bring further recommendations to Members once costs and priorities have been confirmed.

4.9 Friends of Dunstable Cemetery

- 4.12 The Friends of Dunstable Cemetery continue to meet every second Thursday to assist with tasks that are not necessarily a priority for the cemetery grounds team. Recently they have been involved in deadheading floral displays prior to visits from In Bloom and Green Flag judges and have been seen on the Council's social media posts clearing ivy from some of the older gravestones. This work is much appreciated. The Parks Development Officer will support the group over the coming months to encourage new recruits and establish a programme to maximise the benefit from the group's contributions.

5 ALLOTMENTS

Lead Officer: Cemetery and Allotments Manager

- 5.1 The July allotment inspections have been completed. This resulted in 28 Notices to Cultivate and 5 Notices to Quit. There are 13 vacant plots, no plots currently under offer and 1 plot has been given up. The next inspection is scheduled for October.
- 5.2 The current waiting-list is 328. This consists of 78 applicants willing to accept any plot or site, 248 applicants requesting a specific plot or site, and 2 requests for a second plot. 34 people have been added since the last report.
- 5.3 Officers are progressing replacement fencing at Meadway Allotments. Quotations are being finalised and the procurement process is being progressed.

6 SPORTS AREAS AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE

- 6.1 The June report recorded 265 pitch bookings between September 2025 and June 2026 and 57 bookings between 1 April and 31 May 2026. Prolonged dry weather has affected pitch condition and limited the effectiveness of seasonal renovation works. While goalmouth renovations have commenced, seeding cannot currently proceed until ground conditions improve.

6.2

Site	Football Fixtures 25/26 season
Bennetts Rec Ground	52
Downside Rec Ground	31
Kingsbury Rec Ground	72
Peter Newton	61
Ridgeway	49

7 TOWN RANGERS

Lead Officer: Grounds Operations Manager.

- 7.1 Demand on the Town Ranger Service has remained high. The team continues to balance ward work, town-centre watering, market support, bus-stop cleaning, safety checks and responsive requests from residents, Members and officers.
- 7.2 Highlights include:
 - Starting our quarterly bus stop cleaning programme, which generates income for the Council.
 - Giving Dog Kennel Walk, from High Street North to the Blue Bridge, a general spruce-up.
 - Supporting preparations for the In Bloom judging.
 - Maintaining Ashton Square toilets to a high standard ahead of judging visits.
 - Continuing maintenance work at income-generating sites including Eleanor's Cross, Maypole Yard and Apex Business Centre.

- Keeping on top of routine scheduled works, including descaling DTC water fountains, coating town sculptures, carrying out Urbis planter repairs, toilet cleaning and splash park inspections.
- Rangers have also removed all graffiti from all DTC play areas and jet washed down all play equipment

8 TOWN CENTRE

- 8.1 Seasonal planting, rain gardens and Urbis planters have continued to be maintained. Operational works identified along the Britain in Bloom route were completed before judging on 3 August 2026.
- 8.2 Central Bedfordshire Council Highways has been asked to remove planters that were damaged beyond repair. A meeting is being sought with the CBC Highways team to agree a way forward.
- 8.3 Officers are reviewing costs and delivery options for external pavement cleaning on Dunstable High Street to inform an affordable solution.
- 8.4 A cost and resource assessment is also being prepared for town-centre salting and gritting, including salt, staffing and any equipment adaptations required.

9 GREEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Lead Officer: Parks and Green Space Development Officer.

- 9.1 Priory Gardens knee rail: Officers are working with the original designer and the Friends of Priory House and Gardens to develop the next phase of the project. The Friends have offered £1,000 towards the scheme. The proposed knee rail is intended to retain the design style of the completed pergola, and the existing Scheduled Monument Consent remains valid until 2029.
- 9.2 Some of the original budget for this project was required to complete the “Walk Through Time” pergola in Priory Gardens. It may prove to be challenging to deliver the extent of decorative knee rail originally discussed within the remaining budget of £10,837, which includes the £1,000 from The Friends of Priory House. Officers are looking at ways to deliver an appropriate solution within the available budget.
- 9.3 Bloom campaigns: The 2026 Dunstable in Bloom, Anglia in Bloom and Britain in Bloom campaigns were successfully completed. Anglia in Bloom judging took place on 22 July and Britain in Bloom judging took place on 3 August. The Anglia in Bloom Awards are on 24 September 2026, the Dunstable in Bloom Awards Night is on 30 September

2026, and the Britain in Bloom Awards are on 20 October 2026 in Rochdale. The previous Head of Grounds and Environmental Services has been nominated by the judges for a special mention at the RHS awards ceremony later in the year.

Parks Development priorities for 2026/27

- 9.4 The current focus will be on supporting delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities for parks, play areas, green spaces and allotments. Key work will include progressing park management plans, collecting views from park users to inform management decisions, and supporting the development of prioritised plans for play area upgrades. Work will include seeking external funding, sponsorship and partnership support where appropriate.
- 9.5 Brewers Hill and Downs Road plans have been adopted and officers will be working to achieve some early wins where funding allows, including investigating opportunities to include a Legend of the Bench suicide prevention bench and biodiversity improvements through differential mowing and wildflower introduction at Brewers Hill Recreation Ground and provision of additional benches, litter bins and biodiversity improvements at Downs Road Recreation Ground.
- 9.6 The following plans are included in the original 3-year programme approved by Members for delivery in year two of the three year programme. Drafts of these will be available for Member approval by March 2027 and will include Member aspirations related to improvements to play areas.
 - Ridgeway Avenue Recreation Ground
 - Downside Recreation Ground
 - Mentmore Recreation Ground
- 9.7 The following plans will now be delivered during 2027/28
 - Peter Newton Recreation Ground
 - Markham Crescent Public Open Space
 - French's Avenue Public Open Space
 - Olma Road Recreation Ground
- 9.8 There will be continued work to encourage and support community groups, environmental organisations, businesses and volunteers to develop and deliver their own activities in parks to free up the Parks Development Officer to support delivery of the play improvement programme and the review of the Council's Five-Year Allotment Plan. This will include gathering views from plot holders and stakeholders,

encouraging communication and knowledge sharing, and helping to identify practical priorities for the future management and improvement of allotment sites.

10 APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Allotment Waiting List Data August 2026

11 AUTHORS

Jane Conway, Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

Daniel Mott, Grounds Operations Manager

James Stenson – Cemetery and Allotment Manager

Katherine Doyle, Parks and Green Space Development Officer

Appendix 1

Allotment Waiting List Data August 2026

Waiting list	Total	Resident	Non-Resident
Willing to accept any plot/site	78	75	3
Specific plot/site requested	248	248	0
Second plot requested	2	2	0
Offer made - not yet accepted	0	0	0
TOTAL			
Added to list since last report (included in above total)	34	34	0
On list but do not want plot yet (included in above total)	0	0	0

Site	Catchacre	Hillcroft	Maidenbower	Meadway	Pascomb Road	Westfield	ALL SITES
Total available plots on site	27	20	25	128	18	90	308
Vacant plots	0	3	0	8	2	0	13
Notice to Cultivate	0	4	2	14	1	7	28
Notice To Quit	0	2	0	3	0	0	5
Plot under offer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plot Given	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

up							
Inspection Dates	Next inspection to take place in October						

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

GROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE

Purpose of report: To update Members on progress with the Corporate Plan objectives and actions associated with the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. In 2023, a Corporate Plan was adopted by the Council, highlighting the aspirations for the Council between 2024-2027. The purpose of this report is to highlight to Members the achievements to date and the ongoing work of the team to deliver this committee's objectives.

2. PROGRESS ON CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES – GROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

- 2.1. The Corporate Plan 2024 to 2027 contains 50 objectives and of these 22 have been assigned to this committee. Details of progress against each of the 22 objectives are provided in Appendix 1 to this report. 16 objectives for this committee are being successfully progressed or have been completed.

3. PROGRESS ON CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – GROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

- 3.1. The Corporate Plan 2024 to 2027 contains 50 performance indicators and of these 7 have been assigned to this committee. Details of the outcomes against each of the 2025/26 targets are provided in Appendix 2 to this report.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. Some objectives are part of service plans for 2026/27, and progress will be included in future reports.
- 4.2. Members are reminded that KPI's are not targets, rather they are indicators which are intended to help Members understand and review service areas using available data. It is likely that some indicators will be exceeded and some not met. The reasons for these differences will enable Members to have detailed information to help to review service performance.

5. APPENDICES

- 5.1. Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan Objectives–Grounds and Environmental Services
- 5.2. Appendix 2 -- Key Objectives – Grounds and Environmental Services

6. AUTHOR

- 6.1. Corinne Gilmore - Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager
compliance@dunstable.gov.uk

Grounds and Environmental

KEY OBJECTIVES	ACTION		COMMITTEE	RESOURCES	TIMESCALE	STATUS				UPDATE / NOTES
1. Continue to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council										
	2	Carry out internal refurbishment of Kingsbury sports pavilion and renew the roof.	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-25	On Track				Delayed but now on track - March 2027
	7	Create and implement a Biodiversity Policy and Plan	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-27	Complete				This has now been completed and was adopted in June 2024.
	8	Carry out a programme of replacing existing vehicles with more fuel efficient, hybrid or electric vehicles where appropriate	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-27	On Track				Vehicle Replacement policy is in place. Programme of replacement will be amended to reflect budgets, this will be presented at November committee.
	12	Review the use and functionality of the current chapel; scope providing new chairs, a screen, music streaming system and webcast facility	GES	Business plan to be provided; self-funding	Mar-27	Not Started				To be incorporated into service plans for 2026
	14	Provide new office accommodation / mess facilities for grounds staff	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-27	On Track				Planning Permission Submitted
2. Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the Town, creating a sense of pride in Dunstable										
	19	Support Dunstable in Bloom to enter Anglia in Bloom each year	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-27	2024	2025	2026	2027	2024: Complete 2025: Complete 2026: Complete 2027: Not Started
Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town	21	Review and expand the Town Rangers Service.	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-25	Complete				New Ranger appointed in Sept 24
Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town	22	Retain the Heritage Flag for Priory Gardens. Improve access to historical information and interpretation of the site	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-27	2024	2025	2026	2027	2024: Complete 2025: Complete 2026: Complete 2027: Not Started
3. To further improve and develop the provision of the green and open space in the Town										
Develop the provision of green space	24	Take ownership and create garden by White Lion busway stop - College Drive	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-27	On Track				20k funding secured, with 10k to be spent by March 2026. Land Transfer being progressed
	25	Work with Dunstable Town Bowls Club to ensure future provision of outdoor bowling opportunities in Dunstable	GES	To be funded by DTBC	Mar-26	Delayed				Delayed due to external factors.

Grounds and Environmental

KEY OBJECTIVES	ACTION		COMMITTEE	RESOURCES	TIMESCALE	STATUS	UPDATE / NOTES
in the town	26	Plan for and open new cemetery in Dunstable	GES	Public Works Loan to be sought	Mar-29	On Track	Specialist Consultant procured. Early planning stages of planning on track.
	27	Provide one new allotment site	GES	Aspirational	Mar-27	On Track	Provision for 30 allotment plots in planning.
Improve the provision of green space in the town	28	Improve the provision of waste bins on Council property. Combine all general and dog waste to increase the capacity overall and reduce costs	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-25	Complete	Complete
	29	Support allotment holders at one site to create an allotment association to maintain and oversee activities, build a sense of community and engage with the local area	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-27	Delayed	Limited Demand at present
	30	Carry out a feasibility study to identify an open space in one of our current parks that could be used for dog activities	GES	Using current Budgets	Mar-25	Not Started	This objective is not currently being progressed.
	31	Develop and implement green space management plans for each recreation ground. Each plan will involve public consultation consider the headings used for Green Flag management plans along with developing play areas, accessibility and inclusivity, benches, gym trails etc. Year 1 - 2024/25: Kingsbury Recreation Ground , Downs Road Recreation Ground. Brewers Hill Recreation Ground.	GES	Plans created using current budgets	Mar-25	Complete	Delays in first years work will cause delays to future years. Workshops with members have been arranged.
		Year 2 - 2025/26: Ridgeway Avenue Recreation Ground, Downside Recreation Ground +Mentmore Recreation Ground.			Mar-26	Complete	

Grounds and Environmental

KEY OBJECTIVES	ACTION		COMMITTEE	RESOURCES	TIMESCALE	STATUS		UPDATE / NOTES
		Year 3 - 2026/27: Newton Recreation Ground, Markham Crescent Public Open Space , Frenchs Avenue Public Open Space + Olma Road Recreation Ground			Mar-27	Not Started		
	32	Replace Priory Gardens pergola and knee rail	GES	Fundraising	Mar-26	Complete	On Track	Pergola is complete. Knee Rail in progress pending funding confirmation .
	33	Look to maintain more of the grass verges across our town and smarten them up	GES	Funding to be sought from CBC	Mar-27	Not Started		Ongoing Discussions
	34	Resurface the Bennett’s Rec Tennis Courts with a safer surface that can be played on all year round	GES	Aspirational	Mar-27	Delayed		No funding secured at present
	35	Undertake feasibility study and consider the creation of a Pickleball Court in one of our open spaces that incorporates other sporting / activities	GES	Aspirational	Mar-27	Delayed		
	36	Install disabled / inclusive play equipment at larger play sites	GES	Aspirational	Mar-27	On Track		Equipment has been installed at Grove House Gardens playground, using UKSPF funding. No further plans as yet.
6. Represent residents, businesses and community groups of Dunstable on key strategic issues facing the Town								
	50	Ensure best use of developer contributions and key developments in the town	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-27	On Track		Funding being sought for Kingsbury Pavillion development

Corporate Plan Priority (CP)	Key Objective	Service Area	Performance Indicator	2024/25 Target	2024/25 Outturn	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Outturn	2025/26 Outturn commentary	2026/27 Target	2027/28 target	4 Year Target
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Green Spaces	Percentage of residents satisfied overall with green and open spaces	92%	No Data	92%	sample size too small	Response minimal = not enough data to collate	92%	92%	92%
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Green Spaces	To retain Green Flag accreditation at four sites	4	4	4	4		4	4	4
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Green Spaces	% of play equipment faults fixed within 2 working days.	New so no baseline	No Data	95%	No data	Data is not currently collected effectively to enable reporting against this KPI	95%	95%	95%
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Cemetery	To annually retain ICCM Charter for the Bereaved silver status at Dunstable Cemetery.	Silver	Silver	Silver	Silver		Silver	Silver	Silver
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Green Spaces	Number of volunteers working directly with the Council to enhance the town's green spaces	24	114	25	217		26	27	28
3	Improve the provision of green space in the town	Green Spaces	The completion of 10 new management plans for recreation grounds and large open spaces over 3 years – 3 in Year 1, 3 in Year 2 and 4 in Year 3.	3	1	3	3		4		10
4	Improve the provision of green space in the town	Green Spaces	Town Ranger income achieved	£6,000	£5,488	£6,000	£9,067		was £6,000, budget updated 25/26 to £8,240	was £6,000, budget updated 25/26 to £8,487	was £6,000, budget updated 25/26 to £8,487

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

GROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT PRIORITISATION PROGRAMME OVERVIEW REPORT

Purpose of report: To provide an initial assessment of the Council's future requirements for play area replacement.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. It is recommended that Members identify which of the following options they would like Officers to investigate further, and report back through the 2027/2028 budget-setting process:

Option 1, continue the current approach of relying on ad hoc external funding;

Option 2, investigate borrowing to fund a comprehensive replacement programme;

or

Option 3, establish an annual budget and rolling, priority-led replacement programme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Council owns and maintains 15 play, outdoor fitness and recreation facilities. It also manages Grove Skate Park, Bennetts Splash and Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground's older play area. This report refers to the 15 assessed sites collectively as play facilities.
- 2.2. In 2007/08, the Council completed a £270,000 improvement programme at six play areas using section 106 funding. The programme improved fencing and safety surfacing and provided new equipment in areas of greatest need.
- 2.3. In 2017, Members instructed Officers to review all play areas to support capital planning and future funding applications, and a town-wide assessment was completed for the 11 play areas. The weighted model considered condition, accessibility, deprivation and health need, strategic importance and the potential for external funding. The review identified potential investment of £580,000. The Council held £20,000 in reserves and expected £145,000 in section 106 funding for Kingsbury Recreation Ground (previously known as Luton Road Recreation Ground) and Grove House Gardens. Minute 199/2017 records that Members would consider further investment once section 106 receipts or capital funding became available. No budget was created for the remaining £415,000. Since then, the Council has

completed smaller projects, including £40,000 of accessible play equipment at Grove House Gardens funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Significant investment is still needed to maintain safe and sustainable play facilities.

- 2.4. Recent consultations on individual recreation grounds have consistently identified play areas as a priority for development.
- 2.5. Regular safety checks show that the most pressing issue is safety surfacing. Works are required at several sites to ensure surfaces are safe and use materials that will not shrink and become damaged in hot weather.
- 2.6. The Corporate Plan includes an aim to increase accessible play provision. To date, this has only been achieved at Grove House Gardens.

3. OPTIONS

- 3.1. **Option 1: Continue the current approach.** The Council would continue to seek ad hoc external funding as opportunities arise. This would avoid a new annual budget or borrowing commitment, but it would not provide a planned response to ageing facilities and may delay necessary investment.
- 3.2. **Option 2: Borrow to fund a comprehensive replacement programme.** This would allow substantial works to be completed sooner, but it would create significant interest costs and revenue commitments. It may also replace some facilities before necessary and create a future peak when several sites require renewal at a similar time.
- 3.3. **Option 3: Introduce an annual replacement budget.** This would establish a rolling, priority-led programme, as modelled in Appendix 1. It could fund at least one project each year and allow additional work where external funding becomes available. This approach would direct available funding to replacement rather than interest payments, but delivery would take longer and inflation may increase the total programme cost.

4. PRIORITISATION AND PROGRAMME DELIVERY

- 4.1. Members may prioritise the highest scoring sites overall, adopt a balanced approach using the highest scoring site in each of Dunstable North, South, East, West and Central wards, or request further assessment before selecting priorities.
- 4.2. The rankings would guide a phased programme alongside updated condition information, community need, available budgets, external funding opportunities and future Committee decisions. Inclusion does not guarantee that a project will proceed.
- 4.3. Individual projects could be brought forward, combined or delivered sooner where significant external funding, developer contributions or partnership funding is secured. Any change would remain subject to the Council's normal approval and procurement arrangements.

5. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 5.1. No budget approval is sought through this report. For planning purposes, officers have used a minimum allowance of £75,000 per facility. Upgrading all 15 facilities on this basis would give an indicative programme value of £1,125,000. A five-site programme, based on one site in each ward area, would require a minimum indicative provision of £375,000. These figures are planning assumptions, not cost estimates or spending commitments. Potential funding sources include future capital budgets, earmarked reserves, developer contributions, grants and partnership funding. Any project would return to Committee with a defined scope, cost, funding plan and delivery programme before expenditure is committed.

6. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. A planned programme would support the Corporate Plan aim of increasing accessible play provision and would provide a structured basis for long-term capital planning and funding applications.

7. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Accessibility is included in the prioritisation model. Future project scopes should consider inclusive equipment, access routes and the needs of children and families with disabilities.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Ageing equipment, defective surfacing and access issues may increase safety and maintenance risks. Inspection findings and urgent remedial works must continue to inform priorities.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS - none

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. Any project or borrowing proposal would remain subject to the Council's normal approval, procurement and financial arrangements. The Council will be required to carry out repairs where safety reports require this.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. Future designs should consider durable materials, sustainable maintenance, drainage, shade, tree protection and opportunities to improve biodiversity where appropriate.

12. CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. Site design, visibility, layout and management arrangements will be considered in any future changes or developments.

13. APPENDICES

- 13.1. Appendix 1 - Indicative 15-Year Play Area Improvement Programme
- 13.2. Appendix 2: Indicative Borrowing Costs For Delivery

14. AUTHORS

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APPENDIX 1: INDICATIVE REVENUE FUNDED 15-YEAR PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Planning basis: one non-specific play area upgrade per year; £75,000 in Years 1 and 2; 3% annual inflation from Year 3.

Programme year	Indicative project	Inflation assumption	Estimated annual cost	Cumulative programme cost
1	Site 1	Base allowance	£75,000	£75,000
2	Site 2	Base allowance	£75,000	£150,000
3	Site 3	3% annual inflation	£77,250	£227,250
4	Site 4	3% annual inflation	£79,568	£306,818
5	Site 5	3% annual inflation	£81,955	£388,773
6	Site 6	3% annual inflation	£84,413	£473,186
7	Site 7	3% annual inflation	£86,946	£560,132
8	Site 8	3% annual inflation	£89,554	£649,686
9	Site 9	3% annual inflation	£92,241	£741,927
10	Site 10	3% annual inflation	£95,008	£836,935
11	Site 11	3% annual inflation	£97,858	£934,793
12	Site 12	3% annual inflation	£100,794	£1,035,587
13	Site 13	3% annual inflation	£103,818	£1,139,405
14	Site 14	3% annual inflation	£106,932	£1,246,337
15	Site 15	3% annual inflation	£110,140	£1,356,477
Indicative 15-year total			£1,356,477	£1,356,477

The programme is flexible. Projects could be brought forward, combined or delivered sooner where significant external funding, developer contributions or partnership funding becomes available.

This programme supports financial planning only. It does not set the order of sites or approve expenditure. The Council would review priorities and costs as condition, safety, accessibility, community need and funding information changes.

14.1. Appendix 2 – Indicative borrowing costs

APPENDIX 2: INDICATIVE BORROWING COSTS FOR DELIVERY

The figures below illustrate the potential cost of borrowing £1,125,000 to fund the full programme planning assumption.

Indicative Loan Repayment Costs

Amount borrowed	Loan period	Interest rate	annual repayment	Total repayment cost
£1,125,000	10 years	5.80%	£144,559	£1,480,781
£1,125,000	20 years	6.36%	£98,972	£1,859,738

Financial implications

- A 10-year loan would require higher annual repayments but would have a lower total repayment cost.
- A 20-year loan would reduce the annual repayment but increase the total repayment cost.
- Choosing the 20-year term would cost approximately £378,957 more than the 10-year term.

Comparison of Borrowing Options

Option	Annual financial impact	Total borrowing cost	Main advantage	Main disadvantage
10-year loan	£144,559 per year	£1,480,781	Lower overall borrowing cost	Higher annual budget commitment
20-year loan	£98,972 per year	£1,859,738	Lower annual budget commitment	Higher overall borrowing cost