

Annual Council Meeting of Witney Town Council



Wednesday, 8th May, 2024 at 7.00 pm

To members of the Annual Council Meeting Committee - O Collins, J Aitman, T Ashby, R Smith, D Temple, D Enright, A Bailey, L Cherry, R Crouch, G Doughty, J Doughty, D Edwards-Hughes, G Meadows, D Newcombe, J Robertshaw, S Simpson and J Treloar (and all other Town Councillors for information).

You are hereby summonsed to the above meeting to be held in the **Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney** for the transaction of the business stated in the agenda below.

Admission to Meetings

All Council meetings are open to the public and press unless otherwise stated.

Numbers of the public will be limited, with priority given to those who have registered to speak on an item on the agenda. Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact the Committee Clerk derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk in advance.

Recording of Meetings

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings, please let the Deputy Town Clerk or Committee Clerk know before the start of the meeting.

Agenda

1. Election of Town Mayor 2024/25

To receive nominations for the position of Chair/Mayor for the civic year 2024/2025 and to elect the Chair/Mayor.

2. Election Of Deputy Mayor 2024/25

To receive nominations for the position of Deputy Chair/Mayor for the civic year 2024/2025 and to elect the Deputy Chair/Mayor.

3. Election of Leader 2024/25

To receive nominations for the position of Leader of Witney Town Council for the Council term and to elect the Leader.

4. Election of Deputy Leader 2024/25

To receive nominations for the position of Deputy Leader of Witney Town Council for the Council term and to elect the Deputy Leader.

5. **Apologies for Absence**

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Committee Members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Committee Clerk derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk **prior** to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

Standing Order 30(d)(v) permits the appointment of substitute Councillors to a Committee whose role is to replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee have confirmed to the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

6. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

7. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 12)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 15 April 2024 in accordance with Standing Order 18 including questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item.

8. **Public Participation**

The meeting will adjourn for this item.

Members of the public may speak for a maximum of five minutes each during the period of public participation, in line with Standing Order 42. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

9. **Adoption of Meetings Calendar 2024/25** (Page 13)

To formally adopt the timetable of Council Committee meetings for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

10. **Appointment of any new Committees in accordance with Standing Order 30**

To consider whether to create any new Council Committees.

11. **Review (or request the Town Clerk to review) any TORS**

To consider whether any Committee terms of reference should be reviewed for the municipal year 2024/25.

12. **Appointment of Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties and the Election of Chairs** (Pages 14 - 15)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk, and appoint Members to the Standing Committees, Sub-Committees, Working Parties, Task & Finish Groups and Elect the Chairs for the municipal year 2024/25.

13. **Appointment to Advisory Committees & External Bodies/Outside Organisations** (Pages 16 - 18)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk and appoint Members Advisory Committees & External Bodies/Outside Organisations and Elect the Chairs for the municipal year 2024/25.

14. **Review of Council Policies**

To review any Council policies if appropriate, noting that Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were updated in 2023.

15. **Annual Town Meeting Minutes - 20 March 2024** (Pages 19 - 25)
To receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 20 March 2024.
16. **Climate Emergency Action Plan** (Pages 26 - 30)
To receive the report of the Head of Estates & Operations.
17. **Community Governance Review** (Pages 31 - 37)
To receive the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.
18. **Councillor Attendance Register 2023/24** (Page 38)
To receive the annual Councillor attendance register for the 2023/2024 municipal year.



Town Clerk

**FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 15 April 2024

At 7.15 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows	R Crouch
	J Aitman	G Doughty
	T Ashby	D Edwards-Hughes
	D Enright	D Newcombe
	R Smith	J Robertshaw
	D Temple	S Simpson
	A Bailey	J Treloar
	L Cherry	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	Inspector Chris Ball (Thames Valley Police)	

192 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Doughty.

193 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor O Collins declared a personal interest in Item 8 as the applicant of the request for a subsidised letting was known to him.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

194 MINUTES

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 19 February 2024 were received.

Minute Item 99 – A Member raised a concern regarding the wording of the minute. The Town Clerk confirmed that this wording was directly taken from the statement that she made and was therefore an accurate reflection of the meeting. The request for an amendment was withdrawn.

Minute Item 102 – It was suggested that Members may like to re-consider amendments to the Committee Calendar following the resolution of Item 10 on the agenda, in which case, the minutes should be approved subject to this item.

A vote to approve the minutes was taken. The result being:

In Favour	16
Against	0
Abstention	2

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 19 February 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair, subject to minute 102 regarding the Committee Calendar.

195 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

196 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Members received a verbal update from Inspector Chris Ball of Thames Valley Police (TVP). He began by thanking the council for the subsidised use of the Corn Exchange for the launch of the “through their eyes” campaign which attracted 60 attendees. TVP hoped this scheme would be introduced nationally.

He also thanked the Council for the support provided for Youth Services which would complement the sessions that TVP had planned throughout the summer at the All-Terrain Pitch on Gordons Way to engage with younger people.

Insp Ball also reported that his team had recently:

- Begun the introduction of a new scheme (DISC) to link shops and other premises together to share information about incidents, shoplifting and other Anti-Social behaviour.
- Carried out speed enforcement on Downs Road following complaints.

Members thanked Insp Ball for the support TVP had provided in deterring the use of Pony & Trap racing on the A40. Though he advised this was not legal activity there was a concern for safety of the participants as well as other road users.

A Member asked Inspector Ball for further information on the yellow phone located outside Witney police station following the advice from the Inspector at the Annual Town Meeting that residents are able to speak to an officer directly if used. Inspector Ball advised that the calls were routed to the main Kidlington call centre who were able to radio to local officers; he did acknowledge some issue with this facility and residents using web access which he is investigating.

A Member raised concerns about unauthorised access to the old boxing club on Newland; Insp Ball asked that information on the ownership be forwarded to him, and he would try and encourage that repairs are made to restrict the access.

A Member also raised the issue of the level of shoplifting in the town which they described as being “rampant”. In response Insp Ball advised that there had been 13 report incidents in March however, he did not believe it was higher and incidents were under reported. He hoped that the introduction of the new DISC scheme and the encouragement for premises to improve their CCTV technology should help to reduce incidents of shoplifting along with Anti-Social behaviour (ASB) issues in retail premises.

A Member asked if there was evidence of assaults on shop and health workers in Witney. Inspector Ball advised that this was not a major issue other than the ASB mentioned.

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted.

(Inspector Ball left the meeting at 7:40pm)

197 **AN UPDATE FROM WITNEY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Councillor D Enright advised that the planning inspectorate hearing in relation to the Shores Green had ruled in favour of the scheme proceeding and it was hoped this would proceed with pace.

West Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Councillor D Enright highlighted to members that the West Hive scheme can be utilised by small business, 34 grants were paid out in March, the District Council is keen to particularly support requests which provide a Biodiversity or Net Zero advance.

Councillor R Crouch updated members on the activity at the Witney Hotel, the initial occupancy of 280 was now down to around 60 as the Home Office has processed claims and residents are either being sent home or moved on to accommodation in the UK.

Cllr R Smith advised that the district’s housing stock would be looked at by a new Housing Enablement Officer.

Councillor T Ashby advised members that a temporary surface was to be applied by the County Council to the bridleway between the Deer Park and Windrush Place estates. He also reported that work was in progress in relation to an adventure playpark and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) in the Deer Park area.

He also advised that the WODC planning enforcement team was working with businesses on the Tungsten Business Park to ensure they adhere to their planning conditions on lighting and other matters.

Lastly, Councillor J Aitman updated on Youth Services and the funding of a Youth Officer. She also encouraged members to recommend the West Hive scheme and assured members that

organisations should not hold back making applications as WODC officers are very willing to advise and are able to assist in any form filling.

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted.

198 **REPORT BACK FROM THE COUNCILLORS ON THE WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES WHERE THEY SERVE AS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE**

Witney & District Twinning Association

Cllr O Collins along with Cllr R Crouch had attended the AGM and witnessed new energy within the committee and their keenness to celebrate the 35th anniversary with Unterhaching and 45th Anniversary with Le Touquet in 2025.

Witney Educational Foundation

Cllr R Crouch advised the organisation provided several grant opportunities, including for families struggling to pay school trip costs.

Witney Town Charity

Cllr R Crouch updated the Council that works were progressing and that checks on the Almshouses were ongoing, with one currently vacant.

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted.

199 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING - 20 FEBRUARY, 12 MARCH & 9 APRIL**

The minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 20 February, 12 March & 9 April 2024 were received.

P180 – A proposal by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Bailey to include a QR code on the signs to direct the public to information of the current sewage discharge at Colwell Brook was agreed unanimously by Members.

Members also noted the verbal recommendation from the earlier Special Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee regarding the Witney North Strategic Development Area that a Community Governance Review of boundaries should be considered and discussed at a future meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, Officers include a QR code on the Colwell Brook sewerage signage and,
2. That, the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meeting held on 20 February, 12 March & 9 April 2024 be received, and any recommendations therein approved and,
3. That, that officer prepare a report on a Community Governance Review to be received at the Annual Council Meeting on 8 May 2024.

(Cllr A Bailey offered his apologies and left the meeting at 7:54pm)

200 **PARKS & RECREATION - 4 MARCH 2024**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Cllr Aitman thanked the Council and Officers for their support to Earthwatch regarding the erection of the wooden monolith at the Tiny Forest.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 4 March 2024 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

201 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS - 11 MARCH 2024**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 11 March 2024 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

202 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES - 18 MARCH 2024**

The Chair of the Committee, Cllr L Cherry, presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

SC152 - Cllr Smith advised that an online meeting of the Inclusivity & Diversity panel was due to take place on 22 April 2024 and an update to Council would be provided.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 18 March 2024 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

203 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE - 25 MARCH 2024**

The Vice Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

F162 – A Member asked that Officers approach West Oxfordshire District Council to request use of specialist machinery if this would lead to a lesser use of Glyphosate. The Deputy Town Clerk (DTC) advised that the policy was adopted however Officers would consider on a case-by-case basis.

Owing to his earlier declaration, Cllr O Collins relinquished the Chair and passed to Deputy Cllr G Meadows for the consideration of a request for a subsidised letting. The DTC advised that owing to the event being held on 14 June it was necessary to present to the Council at late notice.

Members discussed the request and all members agreed bar the abstention of Cllr Collins to a subsidised let of the Corn Exchange to a value of £257 with the stipulation that evidence of the payments to the two charities is provided to Officers by 28 June 2024.

Resolved:

1. That, a subsidised let of the Corn Exchange to a value of £257 be approved for a charity quiz event in favour of Oxfordshire Mind and Bridewell Gardens subject to evidence of the payments to the charities being provided and,
2. That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 25 March 2024 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

204 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Mayor and Mayor's Secretary which highlighted the civic engagements of the Mayor and Deputy since the last meeting.

He expressed thanks to his Deputy and Secretary and reported that the "Mumma Mayor" event in Thame did not take place however he attended the Chipping Norton Mayor fun run and duck hunt instead.

He also expressed his pleasure at opening the new wheeled sports park which was attended by what he described as over 100 people of all ages.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

(Cllr L Cherry left the meeting at 8:10pm)

205 **MAYOR ELECT**

The Chair, Cllr O Collins invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

With no further nominations forthcoming Cllr Collins was proposed to serve a second term by Cllr G Meadows and seconded by Cllr D Enright. All Members agreed with one abstention from Cllr Collins himself.

Therefore, Cllr O Collins was duly voted Mayor Elect by the Council for the municipal year 2024/2025.

Following the resolution, Members re-considered the calendar of meetings for 2024-25 and were all in agreement that the date of the Annual Council Meeting be reverted back to 8 May 2024 along with an amendment to the first meetings of the Parks & Recreation and Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments in the cycle.

Resolved:

1. That, Cllr Owen Collins be voted Mayor Elect for the ensuing municipal year and,
2. That, the dates of the Annual Council Meeting, Parks & Recreation and Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments be amended, and a new calendar of meetings be circulated. This would include a change of date for the next Traffic Advisory Meeting, now due to be held on 18 June.

206 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

There were no Health & Safety items to update Council on.

207 **CORN EXCHANGE ACCESS & SECURITY**

The Council received the report of the Venue & Events Officer concerning a proposal to install a magnetic door access system to the Corn Exchange main door.

Members were pleased to hear of the potential financial savings and additional security the system would provide however, a member raised a query regarding the release of the doors in the event of a fire alarm.

Members agreed that if the release of the doors occurred in the event of a fire alarm, they were happy to proceed with the purchase at a cost of £1,321 ex VAT.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, Officers further investigate the options for release of the doors in the event of fire and,
3. That, the proposed magnetic lock system is purchased at a cost of £1,321.

208 **VANDALISM & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Council received a list of vandalism reports since the last meeting.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

209 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Council received a verbal report from the Leader regarding a request from CoHSAT (Coalition for Health Streets and Active Travel) to facilitate an awareness meeting between CoHSAT and the residents of Witney regarding the "Traffic Filters" which were being introduced in Oxford during the Autumn, these would require many people who drive vehicles into Oxford to make changes to their route. This would be a chance to receive information at a free, ticketed event and was not a consultation event.

Members discussed a proposal from the leader, seconded by Cllr Aitman for a meeting to be held and that this would be a subsidised letting if Oxfordshire County Council who were introducing the scheme were unwilling to pay for the hire of the venue. A vote was taken, the result of which was:

For	13
Against	0
Abstention	1

Members agreed that the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee would discuss the proposal further at a future meeting of that committee.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal report be noted and,
2. That, the request from CoHSAT be added to the agenda of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee on 15 April 2024 for further discussion.

210 **OCC PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE**

The Council received correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council advising of the approval of the Shore Green development and welcomed the projection of this long-awaited scheme.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

211 **ENVIRONMENT AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE**

The Council received correspondence from the Environment Agency with a project update on the Thames Valley Flood Scheme.

Members welcomed the update.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

212 **ENVIRONMENT AGENCY RESPONSE**

The Council received correspondence from the Environment Agency Area Director for the Thames following the letter submitted by the Council on 21 February 2024 regarding the flooding issues being suffered in the town.

Members were disappointed at the lack of commitment in the reply however were pleased to hear that a programme of works was proposed for August 2024.

Members were also disappointed that a response had not been received from the Environment Minister who was also written to in February 2024.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

213 **POLICE CRIME COMMISSIONER CORRESPONDENCE**

The Council received correspondence from Matthew Barber the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the letter had been restricted in the Agenda Pack due to the pre- election period of purdah as Mr Barber was a candidate seeking re-election.

Members welcomed the update and asked that once the new PCC was appointed that they be invited to a future meeting of the council.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, the future PCC be invited to a meeting of the Council.

214 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

A Member asked that reference to a West Oxfordshire Conservative Association Election Agent in meetings ceased. They were not relevant to the matters being debated by the Council, and if they were so, should be noted in the minutes.

A Member asked that the Council consider the display of a portrait of the King, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that one had been procured through a free nationwide scheme and the matter would be discussed further at the Stronger Communities Committee meeting on 3 June.

In response to a further question, the Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that an update on the Climate Emergency was being prepared by the Head of Estates & Operations for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

215 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

The Town Clerk advised the following leases had been signed and sealed.

Date	No of Seal	Nature of Document
07 March 2024	90	Lease relating to Unit 3 Coseley Building, Windrush Ind Estate, Witney. Welland Property Trustee I Limited & Welland Property Trustee II Limited In duplicate
07 March 2024	91	Licence to carry out works Lease relating to Unit 3 Coseley Building, Windrush Ind Estate, Witney. In duplicate

Resolved:

1. That, the above sealed documents be noted and,
2. That, the seal of the Council be affixed to any documents arising from decisions taken by this meeting of the Council.

The meeting closed at: 8.42 pm

Chair

Witney Town Council – Calendar of Meetings 2024-25

			All meetings held at the Corn Exchange, Witney unless otherwise stated on the published Agenda					
CLIMATE, BIO-DIVERSITY & PLANNING	6pm	Tuesday	23 April 14 May 4 June*†	25 June 16 July*†	6 August 3 September 17 September*†	8 October 5 November 26 November*†	17 December 7 January 28 January 11 February*†	4 March 25 March 22 April*† 13 May*†
PARKS & RECREATION	6pm	Monday	13 May	1 July	9 September	4 November	13 January	10 March
HALLS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS	6pm		20 May	8 July	16 September	11 November	20 January	17 March
STRONGER COMMUNITIES	6pm		3 June	15 July	23 September	18 November	27 January	24 March
POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE (& Personnel sub-committee)	6pm		10 June	22 July	30 September	25 November	3 February	31 March
COUNCIL	7pm		17 June***	29 July	14 October	9 December 16 December**	24 February	28 April×

Sub- Committees

Working parties

Annual Council Meeting – Wednesday 7 May 2025

Annual Town Meeting – Wednesday 19 March 2025

NOTE: CHRISTMAS BREAK – Meetings will not be called between 17 December 2024 and 2 January 2025 unless deemed necessary

* Indicates full Planning Committee Meeting, including minutes † Meeting to incorporate Environmental/Climate Items
Full Planning/Environmental meetings will be held 'in person' with other planning meetings being held online.

** Meeting on 16 December 2024 for budget purposes only

*** Meeting for adoption of AGAR

× Meeting outside of normal schedule due to Bank Holiday

Witney Traffic Advisory Committee at 2.30pm – 18 June 2024, 24 September 2024, 21 January 2025, 18 March 2025

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

Date:	Wednesday, 8 May 2024
Title:	Appointment of Standing Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties and the Election of Chairs
Contact Officer:	Deputy Town Clerk

Background

Members will be aware of the Council's Committee Structure and how the membership works from the previous Annual Council meeting.

For ease the Deputy Town Clerk has provided the following table with details of the membership required.

Committee/Sub-Committee	Membership required
a) Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
b) Parks & Recreation Committee	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
c) Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
d) Stronger Communities	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
e) Policy, Governance & Finance	2 Members + Chair of the above Standing Committees and Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
f) Personnel Sub-Committee <i>[this is a sub-committee of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee]</i>	Town Mayor, Leader, and Chair of above Standing Committees. Subject to inclusion of an elected Member with experience in this field maybe 1 additional Member
g) Disciplinary & Grievance Panel	3 Members* – must not be Chair or Members of Personnel/Policy Governance & Finance Committee

NOTE: The Vice-chair of these Committees/Sub-Committees will be appointed at the first meeting.

Working Parties	Membership required
Christmas Lights Working Party	6 Members - reports to Stronger Communities Committee. <i>Currently: Cllrs T Ashby, R Crouch, D Edwards-Hughes, A Bailey and G Doughty</i>
Task & Finish Groups	Membership required
Inclusivity & Diversity Panel	Chairs of Committees
Youth Council	Currently elected: – Cllrs J Aitman, L Cherry, R Crouch, S Simpson, R Smith, and G Meadows
D-Day 80 th Anniversary	Currently elected: - Cllrs J Robertshaw, J Treloar, A Bailey, and R Smith

NOTE: The Chair of the Working Parties/Task & Finish Groups will be appointed at the first meeting.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following;

1. that the membership to the Council's Standing Committees (a to d) be elected, and;
2. that the Chairs of those Standing Committees be elected, and;
3. that in order to form the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee at e – it be made up of the Committee Chairs (a to d) plus Ex-Officio Town Mayor and Leader, plus 1 additional Member to make the membership of 8 Members;
4. that the Personnel Sub-Committee is formed of the Town Mayor and Leader, plus the Chairs of the Standing Committees
5. that a Disciplinary & Grievance Panel is elected – *to be formed from Councillors not sitting on the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee* – membership is a minimum of 3.
6. that the future of the Working Parties be agreed – membership of the Christmas Lights WP being confirmed if continuing and;
7. that the membership of the Task & Finish Groups be reaffirmed.

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

Date:	Wednesday, 8 May 2024
Title:	Appointment to Advisory Committees & External Bodies/Outside Organisations
Contact Officer:	Deputy Town Clerk

Background

The Town Council appoints representatives to the following Advisory Committees/Outside Bodies, and it is usually recommended that those appointed as per below should serve until the Annual Council Meeting following the next ordinary election of Councillors in 2023, although Members may wish to step down at this juncture if they so wish.

Witney Traffic Advisory Committee	-	4 – J Aitman, T Ashby, S Simpson, R Smith
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils [Larger Councils]	-	1 – Leader of the Council
West Witney Sports & Social Club	-	2 – D Newcombe, R Smith
Witney Town Band	-	1 – O Collins
Witney & District Twinning Association	-	3 (Mayor (Ex officio)) R Crouch, J Doughty
West Oxfordshire Museum Centre	-	1 – O Collins
St Mary's Church Preservation Trust	-	Mayor
Volunteer Link Up	-	1 – J Aitman
RAF Brize Norton – Local Consultation Working Group	-	1 – D Newcombe
Witney Allotment Association	-	1 – R Crouch
Witney Youth Council Mentors	-	2 – G Meadows, S Simpson, J Treloar
Friends of the Cemeteries	-	2 – D Enright, J Doughty
Home Start Champions	-	3 – J Aitman, L Cherry, S Simpson
Lower Windrush Valley Project	-	1 – R Smith
West Oxfordshire Community Transport	-	1 – S Simpson
Witney Fair Trade Action Group Champion	-	1 – R Crouch

North Witney Collaboration Group	-	2 – R Smith, A Bailey
Witney Community Profile Steering Group	-	2 – L Cherry, <i>J Aitman</i>

NOMINEES – SERVING AS TRUSTEES

Listed below are the Town Council nominees serving on other outside bodies. The expiry dates of terms of office on these bodies are shown. The terms of office are set by the various bodies and Council appointments are made on the expiry of the term or vacancies caused by resignation, disqualification, etc.:

(* Denotes non-Member of Witney Town Council) Term of office expires

Witney Town Hall Charity – 4-year term of office

The Witney Town Hall Charity owns the Town Hall, Townhouse and the Buttercross and is the Town Council's landlord. The primary purpose of the Charity is to ensure the properties are kept in good order, and secondly with the rental income a small grant pot is provided to support the work of local organisations.

Mr H B Eaglestone*	May 2025
Ms Mandy Collicut* (Co-opted Trustee)	Feb 2027
Cllr O Collins	May 2027
Cllr S Simpson	May 2027
Mrs R Crouch*	May 2026
Mr D Semaine* (Co-opted Trustee)	Oct 2027
Mrs L J Semaine*	Jun 2026

(The Town Council does not nominate co-opted Trustees)

Witney Town Charity – 4-year term of office

The charitable objectives of the Witney Town Charity are:

1. The provision and maintenance of Almshouses for poor persons
2. The relief of poor persons in conditions of need, hardship or distress. It operates 18 Almshouses and also provides grants for those in need.

Within its constitution it allows for 6 Witney Town Councillors to be on the Trust as nominated Trustees

Mr B Beadle*	May 2026
Mrs M Jones*	Jun 2024
Mrs R Crouch*	May 2026
Cllr G Meadows	May 2027
Cllr J Aitman	Jun 2025
Mr C Woodward*	Feb 2026

Witney Educational Foundation (WEF) – 4-year term of office

WEF provides financial support for the schools of Witney and surrounding communities to enable all students to enjoy full range of activities offered by each school. It also provides grants for families in need, to assist with the cost of extra-curricular activities, educational visits, school clothing and other essential items.

Cllr L Cherry
Mrs L Duncan*
Mr R W Barton*
Mr C K Woodward*

Jul 2027
May 2025
May 2028
May 2026

Cogges Welfare Trust Charity – 4-year term of office

The Cogges Welfare Trust Charity maintains the charities property including the upkeep of the Witney Market Clock and Clock House. Remaining income is used for the relief of hardship etc. by the way of grants to people in need.

Cllr J Aitman
Cllr D Enright
Mr H W Chirgwin*

Jul 2024
Jul 2024
Jul 2024

Madley Park Hall Trust - 4-year term of office

Objectives and aims: The provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of Witney and the surrounding area without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for:

- (a) meetings, lectures and classes, and
- (b) other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants

J Aitman

May 2027

Arising from the above, the nominees required are listed below:

1. Witney Town Charity:-

1 Council-nominated vacancy

The term of office of Mrs M Jones expires in June 2024 – the Charity has advised that Mrs Jones would be willing to stand for another term. She is an active and valued Trustee and although she is not now a Town Councillor, the Charity would welcome Witney Town Council reappointing her for a further 4-year term.

2. Cogges Welfare Trust Charity:-

3 Council-nominated vacancies

The terms of office of Cllrs J Aitman, D Enright and former Councillor (and town council representative) Mr H Chirgwin are all due to come to an end in July.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and

- 1. consider the appointments to the outside bodies/organisations, and
- 2. consider the appointments as trustees to the two organisations where trusteeships have or are due to expire this municipal year.

WITNEY ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Held on Wednesday, 20 March 2024

At 7.31 pm in the Main Hall, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	T Ashby	J Doughty
	D Enright	D Edwards-Hughes
	R Smith	J Robertshaw
	A Bailey	S Simpson
	R Crouch	G Meadows
	G Doughty	
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Polly Inness	Communications & Community Engagement Officer
Others:	74 members of the public.	
	Councillor Michael Brooker, West Oxfordshire District Council	
	Councillor Andrew Coles, Oxfordshire County Council	
	Councillor Andrew Lyon, West Oxfordshire District Council	
	Inspector Chris Ball, Thames Valley Police	

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR OF WITNEY, CLLR OWEN COLLINS

The Town Mayor, Cllr Owen Collins welcomed the public to the meeting which was the best attended that he was aware of. He introduced himself, Councillors and officers of the Town Council, along with the representative from Thames Valley Police.

2 OFFICIAL NOTING OF THE TOWN COUNCILLOR APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Witney Town Councillors J Treloar, J Aitman, D Newcombe and L Cherry.

3 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF 15 MARCH 2023

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 15 March 2023, copies of which were available at the meeting, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

THAMES VALLEY POLICE

The meeting received a verbal update from Inspector Chris Ball of Thames Valley Police with a general update on policing.

Over the previous six months he reported there had been 91 incidents of Criminal damage, 150 assault reports along with a similar level of shoplifting incidents. However, he was concerned that crimes were not being reported and explained how the lack of reporting leads to the resources allocated to his team being reduced.

He continued by reporting that his team had recently disbanded a county lines organisation which resulted in two individuals being sent to prison with a further two on bail.

Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour remained low in his opinion at 106 incidents, again due potentially to non-reporting by residents and retail outlets. Hot spots had been identified on newer housing estates and TVP were working with developers and schools to combat this.

TVP would also be working with detached youth workers and would run sessions at the All-Terrain Pitch on Gordons Way over the summer period to engage with young people.

He was thankful to the support provided by the Town Council towards the new “Through their eyes” initiative that was due to be launched in the Corn Exchange on 26 March 2024. Hopefully, if successful this would be rolled out across the country.

Inspector Ball opened the floor to questions.

A resident asked for further clarification on the assaults figure provided; the Inspector confirmed this included all domestic assaults and that the majority of the figure was made up from incidents involving Licenced Premises. As a result of these assaults a force review was taking place with the potential for a 50% increase of officers on Friday & Saturday nights.

It was raised that there was a difficulty in reporting incidents to TVP due to the lack of a walk-in facility at Witney police station. Inspector Ball acknowledged this and understood the issue however, advised the yellow phone situated at the police station was able to be used to get hold of the Witney Team as well as Inspector Ball himself. Options for reporting online were also being explored.

Councillor J Doughty raised an issue with ASB on Downs Road due to speeding of motor vehicles, Inspector Ball advised that speeding was an issue however, it was data led and one of the ways individuals could assist was to participate in the Speedwatch scheme as the results of these checks were followed up by TVP where necessary.

Cllr Andrew Coles of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) who was the Chair of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee explained that Witney did have a Speedwatch scheme in place and that anyone interested in joining could contact the Town Council for further details.

Cllr Coles (OCC) asked for details of when the crackdown of electric scooters would start. Inspector Ball advised that this was already happening and that sixteen Section 59 seizure notices had been issued by the Witney Team.

Questions were raised about cycling in and around the areas at the back of Henry Box School, St Marys Church, and Corn Street. Residents were concerned about the use of cycles on pavements

and through the churchyard. Inspector Ball advised that TVP did work with schools and PCSO's attended assemblies to educate students. In respect St Marys this was down to a lack of compliance from cyclists however, clearer signage would be one option to explore. A resident advised of a problem with resident parking in Corn Street and that the white cycle lines were not being used or adhered to.

Inspector Ball responded to a question regarding police being on the front line of a mental health crisis and agreed resourcing for such issues was an issue nationally.

Lastly a resident asked about the use of Witney police station since it closed; the Inspector advised of the various different teams of officers that used the station as a base and assured everyone present that it was not under occupied.

5 **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EACH OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STANDING COMMITTEES AND THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Chair summarised his past year as Mayor which had led to him attend a huge number of events; though he had lived in witney all of his life, he was always impressed with the amount that goes on in the community and the efforts of those who contributed to it.

The Chairs of the town council's committees were then invited to give brief updates on their Committees' responsibilities and an overview of what they had been working on during the past twelve months.

Cllr Crouch began as Deputy Chair of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee, followed by, Cllrs Bailey, Smith, Crouch and Meadows who introduced the reports of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee, Parks & Recreation Committee, and Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee and Stronger Communities Committee respectively.

Next, a report from the Leader of the Council, Cllr R Smith was received. She also thanked officers and staff of the Council for their efforts over the past year.

Finally, the Mayor thanked all the Members of the Committees for their support over the past year.

6 **OPEN FORUM TO DISCUSS MATTERS RAISED BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC AT THE MEETING**

Further to the updates from Committee Chairs, the Mayor opened the floor to questions from the public. All were asked to provide their name and home road name before asking their questions.

Q1. In respect of the recently submitted North Witney Development planning application how do Witney Town Council deal with the lengthy technical documentation that is submitted as part of the application, such as the flooding analysis reports?

Cllr A Bailey, as Chair of the Council's Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee, advised that along with Cllr R Smith they represented the Town Council along with representatives from other neighbouring parishes, on the Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group (WING) who were working collaboratively to seek the best outcome for residents on the North Witney Development in respect of the impact not only on flood risk, but on all aspects of the development that may affect current and future residents.

He encouraged residents to submit their comments to the planning authority (West Oxfordshire District Council - WODC).

The Mayor then read three questions out which had been submitted by residents ahead of the meeting.

Q2. Regarding the proposed housing development between Woodstock Road and Hailey Road. Witney is already struggling from a lack of full and proper provision of services and facilities. Now I read that the developer consortium of this proposed estate will not be required to build the West End Relief Road as previously agreed. Considering this development is forecasting 1250 new homes, this would strike most logical people as being a very poor deal for the existing residents of Witney. I request that a full public consultation be conducted in relation to the West End Link Road being a non-negotiable requirement of this development if planning permission is granted.

Cllr R Smith responded and explained that she was aware of the Witney Gazette article that had recently been published in which it was reported the developers had removed details of the link road from their proposal. Witney Town Council would meet to discuss the application soon however, it was important to note that the development fell in the parish of Hailey and that the parish councils were only a consultee in the planning process, the overall decision would be made by WODC.

In respect of flooding risk, she explained that the engineers engaged by the developers had said they would deal with the flooding risks, and though she was sceptical of their comments to date, it would be something the Town Council would represent the views of residents on as well as reviewing the opinion of the other technical consultees.

Cllr Smith also clarified that Oxfordshire County Council had not yet made a final decision on the link road and they may well demand the building of it. She also expected that there would be further public consultation as the planning proposal progressed.

A resident asked if consideration had been given to building the link road to the top of Deer Park Road rather than the proposed Woodford Way. Cllr D Enright responded in his capacity as a County Councillor and explained that many options for the link road had been considered and presented however, the link to Woodford Way was favoured as it provided the most direct route.

Cllr Enright finished by encouraging, as Cllrs Smith & Bailey had, for all present to submit their comments to WODC as the planning authority and that they should contact Town, District & Country councillors if they had any further questions as the plans advanced. This was also something which was reiterated later in the meeting by Cllr M Brooker (WODC) as chair of the Lowlands Planning Committee, he emphasised the importance of residents submitting their views as these were all read by the planning officers when considering the application.

Q3. Why are many thousands of pounds spent on plant bunkers, flower beds, white imitation gates on the roads into the town and other numerous unnecessary projects?

The Mayor responded to explain that the Town Council carried out the work of planting across the town as an act of Civic Pride, in his opinion the town looked better for a “splash of colour” and believed that the council team did an excellent job with the land they manage this included the areas of wildflower planting such as the roundabout at Welch Way as these provide pollinating and bee friendly areas.

Q4. In Corn Street between the traffic calming humps by Sue Ryder shop and Marlborough Lane in the day, but especially at night vehicles parked cause problems for traffic. Buses are affected worse than small cars. There should be double yellow lines on both sides of the road and if there are already lines they need repainting.

Inspector Ball from Thames Valley Police responded to say that yellow lines were in place however parking enforcement was managed by OCC; He would raise the issues in Corn Street when he next met with them.

Q5. Are shops allowed to ban school children from entering their premises whilst in school uniform or resist them to only entering in individually or maximum of two at a time? With the lack of facilities after school this does not seem fair.

Inspector Ball confirmed that shop owners were allowed to restrict access in order to protect their livelihoods, they were not breaking any law by doing so. He sympathised as the majority of children in groups were simply gathering to have a chat and were not always responsible for causing issues; it was the incorrect perception of others that lead to this feeling.

The Mayor explained the action taken by the Town Council to support youth services in the town such as the new detached youth programme it has financed, and the refurbished wheeled sports park which would be opening at the end of that week. He finished by thanking the resident for their question and challenging those present not to stigmatise or judge “young people for being young people” and to make them feel welcome as part of the community.

Q6. If No Mow May regime is due to be followed again this year is there the possibility of improvements as last year Welch Way for left for some time, could more be done to present these areas better, perhaps with more wildflower planting?

Cllr D Enright, responded by saying that as a Member of the Town, District and County Councils he accepted that getting all three and private owners of grassed areas to work together was a struggle however, he believed this was closer than ever before. The Town Council did a great job of the areas it was responsible for however, if it were to take on more areas under its remit this would require it being financed from the other stakeholders.

He reported that OCC had agreed to cut the verges twice this year and would ask that all Councils focus on ensuring that long grass at junctions and footpaths were well maintained.

Lastly, he praised the residents that had taken action to improve the area around their own properties whether that was by litter picking, gutter clearance or maintenance of small areas, though he acknowledged this should not be expected of them as it remains the responsibility of the various Councils.

A resident asked later in the meeting that thought be given to reduce the heaps of grass that were left following the cutting of areas that had been left to grow longer, perhaps using machinery that can mulch the grass as it cuts. The Mayor advised these points would be passed on.

Q7. What does the Town Council do with the flowers that it removes from the planted beds around the Town?

The Mayor advised that these were offered to individuals and groups for them to replant, usually by notice on social media if in an acceptable condition. Should any residents wish to receive any they were welcome.

Q8. Following the theme of the umbrella at Marriotts Walk last year what is planned for this year?

Cllr Enright advised umbrellas would be the theme again this year, however they would be in a different pattern and would be treated to ensure they did not fade over the summer months.

Q9. When will the work at West Witney Sports & Social Club commence? What is the cost of the works?

Cllr Smith advised that, at the request of the Club, work would commence in the Autumn of 2024, subject to financing being agreed. The expected cost was £600- 800k which would be financed by either a community ownership grant, the same as received for the redevelopment of The Leys, or by the Council taking on a public works loan, or a mixture of both. The Council had budgeted for the loan so this option would not delay the project.

She also confirmed that the expediated work at The Leys had resulted in the relocation of the Works Depot to the West Witney area and officers would continue to search for a permanent location. This had however resulted in additional unforeseen costs to these two large scale projects.

Q10. Witney is proud to be a Fairtrade town and an event is planned to mark the 30-year anniversary in September. Would the Town Council be happy to provide support?

The Mayor agreed the Council would be delighted to provide support to the organisers and welcomed them to get in contact with Officers to discussed what the council could do. It was also noted that Witney was registered as the 1,000th Fairtrade town.

Q11. Please can you update on the Shores Green development?

Cllr Enright was able to update that the delay had been due to an enquiry held by the Planning Inspectorate following objections being registered by the owners of the land that the new road junction would be built on. The landowners did not attend the enquiry and therefore a decision was swiftly made to proceed with the project. He hoped that work would commence in 2024 with completion in 2025.

Q12. Many of the paths are overgrown and make cycling difficult, what can be done?

The Mayor asked that these be reported to the Council so action could be taken; this was not limited to paths, but any areas that would benefit from tidying up, new grit bins etc. The responsible council could then be chased up to action if it is an area that the Town Council did not control.

In response Cllr Andrew Coles (OCC) thanked the Town Council for carrying out works that it did not have to do, such as the support provided to Riverside Gardens who appreciated the help with flood prevention by way of filling and arranging sandbags to protect their properties.

Q13. What is the Town Council doing to use its powers to find additional allotment sites to meet the demand, as the current waiting list sits at around 200? And what is done to encourage social use of the allotments by the community collectively and by those with additional needs?

Cllr Smith explained that new allotment sites were a result of new developments however, accepted that both the Town and District Councils could look at exploring the options outside of these developments.

Cllr R Crouch advised the most recent addition to the Council's allotments portfolio at the Windrush Estate has raised beds for use by those with reduced mobility, as well as having an area that was utilised by the school and acknowledged the importance to support their use.

7 TOWN MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS AND THANKS

The Mayor thanked the public for attending the meeting and reminded them they are welcome to approach Councillors at any time including at the Councillors in the café events which were held each month in the Corn Exchange.

He finished by inviting attendees to stay should they wish for the opportunity to speak to Councillors informally and thanking everyone for continuing to do what they could to make Witney a welcoming and dynamic place to live and visit.

The meeting closed at: 9.06 pm

Chair

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

Date:	Wednesday, 8 May 2024
Title:	Climate Emergency Action Plan
Contact Officer:	Head of Estates & Operations

Background

Witney Town Council declared a Climate Emergency at the Council meeting on 26th June and swiftly followed up with a Public Meeting on Sunday 28th July enabling everyone to share ideas and visions for change, and to explore ways in which we can all work together to make Witney net-zero carbon as soon as possible.

To explain why the government, local councils and organisations have declared an emergency; Many organisations have been working for many years to try to prevent climate change, but change needs to happen faster. It's a key priority to prevent global temperatures from increasing by more than 1.5%, the consequences of which, would have a massive impact on all of us.

Witney Town Council is committed to ensuring it does everything possible to address climate change and has set a target to become carbon neutral by 2028 to ensure a cleaner and better future for its residents.

West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council have made a commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Members may have heard the terms carbon neutral and net zero, and there is a difference between the two.

1. Carbon neutrality is when you calculate your carbon emissions and compensate for what you have produced via carbon offsetting projects. Offsetting carbon emissions, in addition to avoidance and reduction, is how this is achieved.
2. The net zero target refers to a government commitment to ensure the UK reduces all its greenhouse gas emissions by 100% from 1990 levels by 2050.

Legislation

The Climate Change Act 2008 is the basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. It requires that emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are reduced and that climate change risks are adapted to. The Act also establishes the framework to deliver on these requirements. The Act supports the UK's commitment to urgent international action to tackle climate change.

A Climate and Nature Bill is currently before the UK Parliament that ensures a comprehensive and joined-up approach to the climate emergency and nature crisis. While the existing Environment Act only offers to halt the decline of nature by 2030, the Climate and Nature Bill commits to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030.

Current Situation

Witney Town Council need to create a climate change strategy and a climate emergency action plan. The Town Council will have to be mindful of the County Council and District Council's climate actions, targets and objectives to enable WTC to focus on what can be achieved within its control and remit, while at the same time being able to deliver as a collective.

These documents will be produced by WTC officers setting clear targets and detail the journey with clear milestones that will include a reassessment of the Council's present carbon emissions, identifying and prioritising actions.

Since the council declared the climate emergency in 2019 the council has;

- calculated WTC carbon footprint for 2019-2020 to be 64.08 tCO₂e, and a further 34.83 tCO₂e with the inclusion of West Witney Sports Club and Langdale Hall. Appendix 1.
- purchased an electric vehicle to replace a diesel vehicle within the operations teams fleet, and the council have agreed to another electric vehicle when the next vehicle is due for renewal this year.
- invested £4,000 in replacing combustion powered ground maintenance tools, hedge trimmers, strimmers and blowers with battery powered.
- offered two forms of green burials, woodland and meadow. Both are designed to be environmentally friendly, with no plastic tributes, no headstones, and biodegradable coffins.
- recycled good quality soil from street future installations for reuse in burials.
- recycled hedge & tree cuttings being chipped and reused in flower beds, and mixed with poor quality soil to enhance and improve its use in bedding and allotments.
- distributed bark removed from play areas to allotment sites along with chippings.
- a tree replacement programme to ensure our tree stock doesn't diminish and explored expanding the programme on available land.
- improved the efficiency of the heating to Town Council offices where all new electric radiator emitters are energy efficient ceramic core units.
- replaced the heating and hot water system at Burwell hall with an efficient condensing gas boiler and a remote programming control system that has saved over £2,500 of energy use and over 200kg of CO₂ over the winter months.
- installed LED or CFL lighting in the offices.
- procured energy efficient printers in the office that include a scheme of tree planting to offset the paper used.
- provided recycling bins across all buildings and open spaces.
- selected the most competitive utilities supplier that supplies energy through 100% renewable sources.

- committed to several major projects that will reduce our carbon footprint and emissions through asset renovation and modernisation that include West Witney Social Club, Langdale Hall and a New Depot. There will also be the opportunity to offset our carbon emission using renewable technologies.
- included energy efficiency in the scoring matrix within the procurement of the Christmas illuminations contract currently out to tender.
- bus shelters with green sedum roofs with benefits to the environment not only as a carbon sink, but providing a habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, adding to the biodiversity of the town.
- recycled coffee bags to be used on the edible garden for soil nourishment
- incorporated climate and nature recovery when providing comments to planning applications focussing on the use of renewable energy and sustainable design, and environmental and biodiverse thinking for biodiversity net gain.
- Four allotment sites producing local produce encouraging healthy eating and minimising the impact of transportation.
- created 300m of new hedgerow
- created a Tiny Forest (600 whips)
- completed 60m of bank work increasing the level of carbon offset
- started working on Biodiversity Net Gain
- secured funding for wet meadow habitat reinstatement that will enhance carbon sequestration

There is a wealth of guidance and support for local councils which will be utilised to help WTC achieve its goals.

These include but are not restricted to;

- National Association of Local Councils (NALC) [Website Link](#)
- Centre for Sustainable Energy <https://www.cse.org.uk/about-us/>
- The Great Collaboration <https://greatcollaboration.uk/>
- Climate Emergency UK <https://climateemergency.uk/>

Environmental impact

As noted above.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

The draft Action Plan and Climate Change Strategy will be reported to Council for approval.

Financial implications

Described here or as stated in the report above.

There will be costs associated with the Climate Emergency Action Plan that will follow Council process to be reported to committees for approval.

All funding opportunities will be explored to support climate action costs and WTC will maximise the use of support by the various organisations and agencies available.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Officers will produce a climate change strategy and a climate emergency action plan.

Summary

Scope	Emissions Type	Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	Percentage of Total Emissions
Scope 1	Heating	19.23	30.0%
	Fugitive Emissions	0.00	0.0%
	Authority's Fleet	0.89	1.4%
Scope 2	Electricity	40.52	63.2%
Scope 3	Staff Travel	0.00	0.0%
	Transmission & Distribution Losses	3.44	5.4%
	Water	0.00	0.0%
Total Emissions		64.08	100.0%

Summary by scope

Scope	Emissions Type	Activity	Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	Percentage of Type Emissions	Percentage of Total Emissions
Scope 1	Heating	Natural Gas	19.23	100.0%	30.0%
		Burning Oil - Kerosene	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Gas Oil	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Wood Pellets	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
	Fugitive Emissions	HFC-32	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		R410A	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		HCFC-22/R22	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Other Fugitive Emissions	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
	Authority's Fleet	Small diesel car ≤ 1.7 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Medium diesel car, 1.7 - 2.0 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Large Diesel Car > 2.0 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		MPV - Diesel	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Diesel van Class I (up to 1.305 tonnes)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Diesel van Class II (1.305 to 1.74 tonnes)	0.89	100.0%	1.4%
		Diesel van Class III (1.74 to 3.5 tonnes)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Diesel 4x4	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Minibus - Diesel	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Small Petrol Cars ≤ 1.4 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Medium Petrol Car 1.4 - 2.0 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Large Petrol Car > 2.0 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Small Hybrid Car - Petrol	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Medium Hybrid Car - Petrol	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Large Hybrid Car - Petrol	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Electric Vehicle (Average Sized Car)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Average Medium Car (Unknown Fuel)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Rigid HGV (>3.5 - 7.5 tonnes)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Rigid HGV (>7.5 tonnes-17 tonnes)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Rigid HGV (>17 tonnes)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		All Rigid HGVs	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Articulated HGV (>3.5 - 33t)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Articulated HGV (>33t)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		All Articulated HGVs	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		All HGVs	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Other Vehicles - Diesel	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Other Vehicles - Petrol	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
Scope 2	Electricity	Building Use	34.17	84.3%	53.3%
		Streetlighting	6.34	15.7%	9.9%
Scope 3	Staff Travel	Small Petrol Motorbike (Mopeds/Scooters up to 125cc)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Medium Petrol Motorbike (125-500cc)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Average Medium Car (unknown fuel)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Small Petrol Cars ≤ 1.4 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Medium Petrol Car 1.4 - 2.0 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Large Petrol Car > 2.0 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Small Diesel Car ≤ 1.7 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Medium Diesel Car 1.7 - 2.0 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Large Diesel Car > 2.0 litre	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Small Hybrid Car - Petrol	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Medium Hybrid Car - Petrol	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Large Hybrid Car - Petrol	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Electric Vehicle (Average Sized Car)	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
	Transmission & Distribution Losses	T&D Losses - Scope 2 Electricity	3.44	100.0%	5.4%
		T&D Losses - EV	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
	Water	Water Supply	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
		Water Treatment	0.00	0.0%	0.0%

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ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

Date: Wednesday, 8 May 2024

Title: Community Governance Review

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

Background

At the meeting of the Council on 15 April, recommendation P191 from the earlier Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee, to explore options for a Community Governance review of Witney's parish/town boundary, was approved.

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on Community Governance Reviews so they may resolve whether Witney Town Council should engage with West Oxfordshire District Council and others to petition for one.

Current Situation

West Oxfordshire District Council (as the Principal Authority) has the responsibility for undertaking such reviews under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and are able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, they need to take account of the views of local people. In other areas, principal authorities have a designated policy for reviews such as this one at Vale of White Horse DC,

'that the council undertakes a community governance review every four years with changes agreed for implementation at the next scheduled parish elections'

'that a significant development proposal that sits adjacent to or straddles a parish boundary should automatically trigger a community governance review, such a review to take place on the inclusion of a site in a document that forms part of the approved Local Plan or when planning permission has been granted for the development of the site.'

As the time of writing, a policy on Community Governance Reviews at WODC has not been provided, but the Authority would be bound to conduct this in accordance with the guidance on community governance reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in April 2008 from where the majority of the remaining information in this report emanates from.

'Criteria for undertaking a Community Governance:

Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires principal councils to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:

- *reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and*
- *effective and convenient.*

When considering the criteria identified in the 2007 Act, principal councils should take into account a number of influential factors, including:

- *the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and*
- *the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish*

In considering this guidance, the impact on community cohesion is linked specifically to the identities and interests of local communities. Size, population and boundaries are linked to both but perhaps more specifically to community governance being effective and convenient.'

Town/Parish Boundaries

It is understood Witney's parish boundary has not been reviewed since before the introduction of the 2007 Act (although electoral boundaries have) and they are therefore based on historic identifiable landmarks. Since that time, several pieces of land have been allocated in the West Oxfordshire Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHEELA) and by designation in the West Oxfordshire District Council Plan 2031, such as the North Witney Strategic Development Area.

The Council discussed planning proposal 24/00482/OUT, described as the North Witney Strategic Development Area New Yatt Road Witney at a Special Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meeting on 15 April and noted the development for outline permission residential-led mixed-use sits adjacent to residential areas at Woodstock Road (Madley Park), Early Road, Vanner Road, Eastfield Road, and Hailey Road all of which lie in Witney Parish. A map showing the North Witney development area in relation to the Witney boundary along with other peripheral sites is attached as **Appendix A**.

Members should determine whether it would be incongruous for people within these developments to look at different parishes across a road. It may be logical to assume that, for community cohesion, residents will identify themselves as witney residents and utilise the witney retail, health and leisure facilities.

Guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) states,

'Community governance reviews provide the opportunity for principal councils to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. It can be helpful to undertake community governance reviews in circumstances such as where there have been changes in population, or in reaction to specific or local new issues. The Government has made clear in the 2006 white paper and in the 2007 Act its commitment to parish councils. It recognises the role such councils can play in terms of community empowerment at the local level. The 2007 Act provisions are intended to improve the development and coordination of support for citizens and community groups so that they can make the best use of empowerment opportunities'

'In many cases making changes to the boundaries of existing parishes, rather than creating an entirely new parish, will be sufficient to ensure that community governance arrangements to continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. For example, over time communities may expand with new housing developments. This can often lead to existing parish

boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across the boundaries resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours. In such circumstances, the council should consider undertaking a community governance review, the terms of reference of which should include consideration of the boundaries of existing parishes.'

In its official response to the above planning application, the town council stated, "With the creation of approximately 1,250 dwellings, generating an estimated population of 3,000, Witney Town Council expects a significant impact from the residents of this development who will look towards Witney for the vast majority of its services and infrastructure, given the proximity to the town and the natural buffer to the Hailey village envelope." But Members should note this land is in Hailey Parish and as such, is in the Hailey Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

The Council should consider whether similar arguments could be made for other peripheral sites at the edges of the parish boundary.

Warding arrangements

Parish warding should be considered as part of a community governance review. Parish warding is the division of a parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors. This includes the number and boundaries of any wards and the names of such wards.

If the town council believes consideration should be given towards amending the parish boundaries, further consideration should be given to revised warding arrangements for the town.

Number of parish/Town Councillors

Consideration should also be given to the levels of representation between each ward. That is to say, the number of councillors to be elected from each ward and the number of electors they represent.

If the town council agrees to both of the above, consideration should also be given to the number of parish/town councillors to serve Witney.

'Ultimately, the recommendations made in a community governance review ought to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.'

How a Community Governance Review can be triggered

Under the 2007 Act, Community governance reviews may be triggered by local electors presenting public petitions to the principal council.

The petition must set out at least one recommendation that the petitioners want the review to consider making. These recommendations can be about a variety of matters, but it is suggested that if the Council is favourable to a review it would do so under the following:

- 1) The boundaries of Witney
- 2) The warding arrangements
- 3) The number of parish/town councillors

For a petition to be valid it must meet certain conditions. The first of these conditions is that a petition must be signed by the requisite number of local electors. For Witney, as an area with more than 2,500

local electors, the petition would need to be signed by approximately 3,000 electors (10% of the population).

The petition should define the area to which the review relates, whether on a map or otherwise, and refer to identifiable fixed boundaries. Where a proposed boundary is near an individual property, the petition must make clear on which side of the boundary the property lies. The petition must specify one or more proposed recommendations for review

The 2007 Act allows principal councils to determine the terms of reference under which a community governance review is to be undertaken before consulting with the public.

Timing of community governance reviews

The 2007 Act provides for a principal council to conduct a community governance review at any time.

'A principal council is under a duty to carry out a community governance review if it receives a valid community governance petition for the whole or part of the council's area. However, the duty to conduct a review does not apply if:

a) the principal council has concluded a community governance review within the last two years which in its opinion covered the whole or a significant part of the area of the petition or

b) the council is currently conducting a review of the whole, or a significant part of the area to which the petition relates.

Under the 2007 Act principal councils are required to consult both Section 2 Undertaking community governance reviews 15 those local government electors in the area under review, and others (including a local authority such as a county council) which appears to the principal council to have an interest in the review. In the case of a community governance review where a parish council already exists, as a local authority, it too should be consulted. Other bodies might include local businesses, local public and voluntary organisations - such as schools or health bodies. The principal council must take into account any representations it receives as part of a community governance review.

Principal councils are required to complete the review, including consequential recommendations to the LGBCE for related alterations to the boundaries of principal area wards and/or divisions, within 12 months of the start of the community governance review. The review begins when the council publishes terms of reference of the review and concludes when the council publishes the recommendations made in the review.'

The above timescale may be impacted by any ordinary elections and reviews of district ward boundaries being undertaken by WODC.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

- A successful review would result in land from neighbouring parishes being incorporated into Witney, potentially to their detriment in respect of income, land size and electoral arrangements.
- the focus of people's day-to-day activities may not be reflected in their feeling of community identity. For instance, historic loyalty may be to a town, but the local community of interest and social focus may lie within a village/different area.
- A review may be refused if there is insufficient evidence of 'strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features;' current boundaries are based on the identifiable town features of the A40 and Downs Road. Note: Although the Town Council owns and maintains the land at Witney Lake and Lakeside allotments, this sits within Ducklington parish.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- Parish/Town Councils continue to have two main roles: community representation and local administration. For both purposes it is desirable that a parish should reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its own sense of identity. The views of local communities and inhabitants are of central importance in this process.

The identification of a community is not a precise or rigid matter. The pattern of daily life in each of the existing communities, the local centres for education and childcare, shopping, community activities, worship, leisure pursuits, transport facilities and means of communication generally will have an influence.

Financial implications

- An increase in dwellings in the Witney Parish would increase its Council Tax Base and subsequent Council Tax Precept receipts.
- Ongoing costs for any community facilities, including grounds maintenance would likely be the responsibility of the town council. This cost is currently unquantifiable.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

- Whether Witney Town Council should resolve to request a Community Governance Review of the Witney Parish boundary, warding arrangements, and number of Ward Councillors from West Oxfordshire District Council and, if it is in favour in principle;
 - That, a Working Party/task and finish group is established to progress this issue on behalf of the Council.
 - That, communications are entered into with Witney's neighbouring parish(es) at the earliest opportunity.

Appendices

Appendix A – Map of Witney Parish Boundary, North Witney, and peripheral sites.

Footnotes:

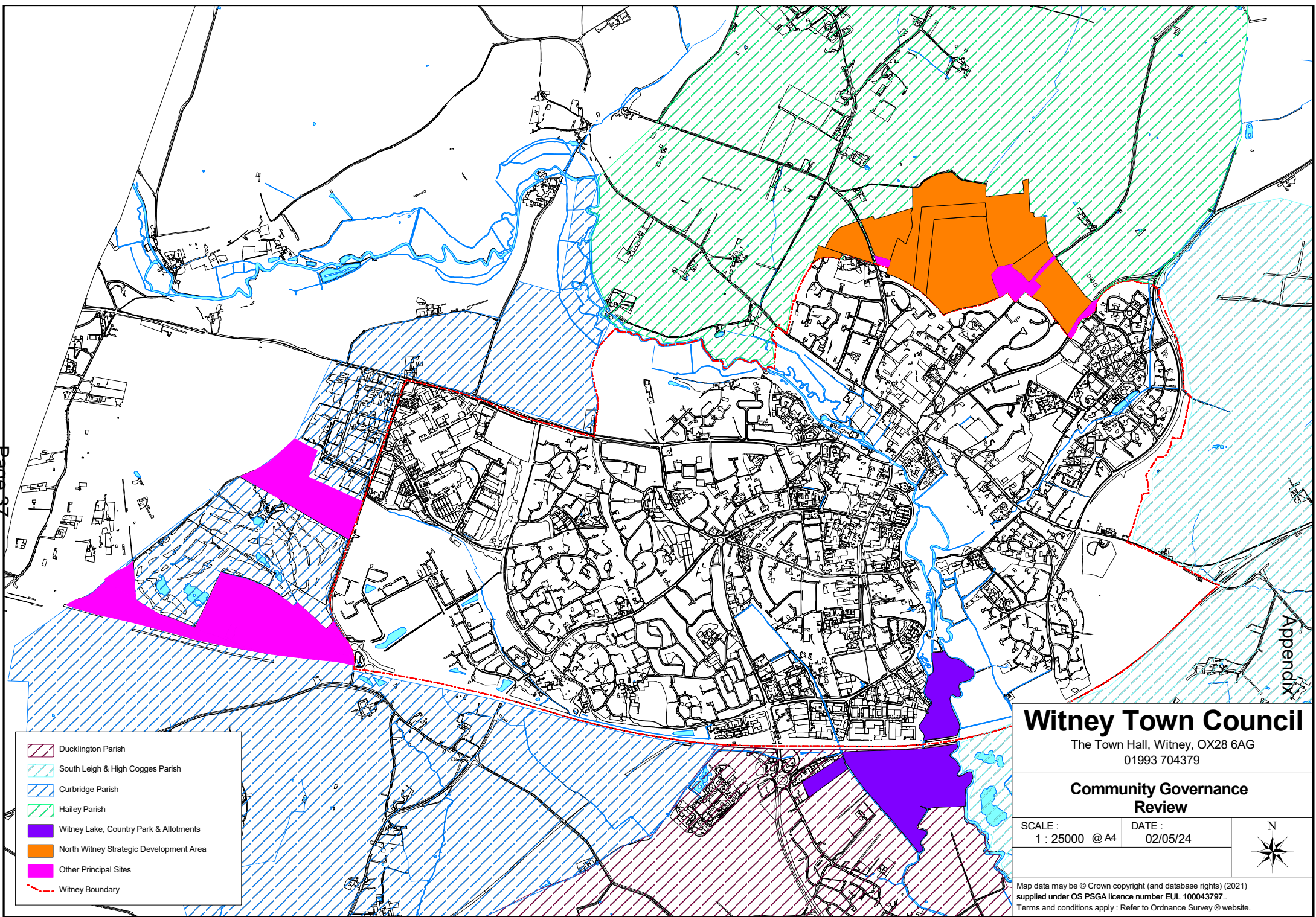
- Community governance reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)'

The full document can be found by clicking this link

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a78e983ed915d0422066530/1527635.pdf>

- West Oxfordshire Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHEELA)

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/y0qkusrf/strategic-housing-and-economic-land-assessment-report-2016.pdf>



- Ducklington Parish
- South Leigh & High Cogges Parish
- Curbridge Parish
- Hailey Parish
- Witney Lake, Country Park & Allotments
- North Witney Strategic Development Area
- Other Principal Sites
- Witney Boundary

Witney Town Council

The Town Hall, Witney, OX28 6AG
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Community Governance Review

SCALE : 1 : 25000 @ A4	DATE : 02/05/24
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Appendix

Councillor Attendance 2023-2024 - Committee Meetings						
	Expected Attendances	Present	Percentage	Absent	Apologies received	In Attendance
Cllr Joy Aitman	54	45	83%	0	9	0
Cllr Thomas Ashby	29	26	90%	0	3	6
Cllr Andy Bailey	44	28	64%	5	11	0
Cllr Lisa Cherry	24	8	33%	0	16	1
Cllr Owen Collins	54	35	65%	1	18	0
Cllr Rachel Crouch	34	32	94%	1	1	2
Cllr Geoff Doughty	24	24	100%	0	0	6
Cllr Jane Doughty	24	20	83%	0	4	3
Cllr David Edward-Hughes	27	27	100%	0	0	0
Cllr Duncan Enright	19	17	89%	0	2	1
Cllr Georgia Meadows	40	37	92%	1	2	0
Cllr Denis Newcombe	30	27	90%	1	2	1
Cllr James Robertshaw	31	27	87%	0	4	3
Cllr Sandra Simpson	36	33	92%	0	3	1
Cllr Ruth Smith	55	51	93%	0	4	1
Cllr Dean Temple	31	12	39%	8	11	0
Cllr Jack Treloar	22	19	86%	1	2	4