

## Full Council

## Meeting of Witney Town Council

**Monday, 23rd June, 2025 at 7.00 pm**



To members of the Full Council - A Bailey, J Doughty, O Collins, G Meadows, J Aitman, T Ashby, D Enright, R Smith, D Temple, A Mubin, R Crouch, G Doughty, D Edwards-Hughes, D Newcombe, J Robertshaw, S Simpson and J Treloar

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](mailto: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. 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](mailto: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.

#### 2. 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.

#### 3. Minutes (Pages 7 - 14)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 7 May 2025 in accordance with Standing Order 18 including questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item.

4. **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.

5. **Witney Community Policing Issues**

To receive an update from the Witney Police Team and consider the request for the Town Council to support the consultation on the application for a Public Spaces Protection Order on the A40 (verbal report from Inspector Ball/Town Clerk at the meeting)

6. **An Update from Witney Oxfordshire County Councillors and West Oxfordshire District Councillors**

To receive a short verbal update from Oxfordshire County Councillors representing Witney Wards and West Oxfordshire District Councillors.

7. **Report Back from the Councillors on the Work with External Bodies where they serve as the Town Council's Nominated Representative**

To receive a short verbal update from councillors who sit on external bodies where they serve as the Town Council's nominated representative.

8. **Minutes of Committees and Sub Committees**

To receive and NOTE the RESOLUTIONS in the minutes of the meetings held between 22 April and 23 June 2025, and agree the RECOMMENDATIONS contained therein.

- a) **Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee - 22 April 2025** (Pages 15 - 20)
- b) **Planning & Development Committee - 13 May & 3 June 2025** (Pages 21 - 28)
- c) **Climate & Biodiversity Committee - 20 May 2025** (Pages 29 - 32)
- d) **Parks & Recreation Committee - 12 May 2025** (Pages 33 - 38)
- e) **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 19 May 2025** (Pages 39 - 43)
- f) **Stronger Communities Committee - 2 June 2025** (Pages 44 - 49)
- g) **Policy Governance & Finance Committee - 9 June & 23 June 2025 (verbal update)** (Pages 50 - 56)

9. **Standing Orders** (Pages 57 - 86)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

10. **Committee Terms of Reference** (Pages 87 - 91)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

11. **Scheme of Delegation** (Pages 92 - 104)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

12. **Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025**

In line with The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 - To receive and consider the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for 2024/25 – and formally agree and adopt.

13. **Public Works Loan Borrowing - West Witney Sports Ground** (Pages 105 - 118)  
To receive and consider the joint report of the Project Officer and Responsible Finance Officer.
14. **Climate Action Working Party**  
To consider membership of this Working Party, recommended by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee under minute no: CB296 of the meeting held on 20 May 2025.  
  
The WP is formed to help expediate the creation of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and direct Council resources to achieve the Council's carbon neutrality aims. Membership need not be more than five Councillors.
15. **Civic Announcements** (Pages 119 - 120)  
To receive the report of the Mayor & Mayor's Secretary.
16. **Health & Safety** (Pages 121 - 124)  
To receive the report of the Compliance & Environmental Officer.
17. **Vandalism** (Page 125)  
To receive an update showing the latest vandalism to Council property and reported Anti-Social Behaviour.
18. **Complaints & Compliments** (Pages 126 - 134)  
To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.
19. **Future of Local Government in Oxfordshire - (See next page for details)**

To receive information regarding the options proposed by Local Authorities regarding the future of Local Government in Oxfordshire and consider whether the town council should submit any queries, or support during the current consultation periods. Members may like to consider delegating this matter to a small group of Councillors.

#### **Option 1**

Two new unitary councils with the working titles of Oxford and Shires Council and Ridgeway Council. This proposal is being developed by West Oxon & Cherwell District Councils.

- **Oxford and Shires Council** would comprise all of the existing district areas of Cherwell, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire.
- **Ridgeway Council** would be made up of the whole of West Berkshire Council's area and all of the existing district areas of South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.

<https://news.westoxon.gov.uk/news/your-views-will-help-shape-proposals-for-a-new-local-council-for-our-area>

#### **Option 2**

A single unitary council covering the current county council boundary. This proposal is being developed by Oxfordshire County Council.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/>

#### **Option 3**

Three unitary councils. One covering Oxford City but with expanded boundaries from the current city council. A second including the current districts on Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire along with West Berkshire. A third including the current districts of West Oxfordshire and Cherwell. This proposal is being developed by Oxford City Council.

<https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1696/greater-oxford-one-council-local-decisions-a-better-place-to-live>

#### **20. Part night-time Lighting (Pages 135 - 149)**

To receive notice of and consider a response to a consultation by Oxfordshire County Council on a part night-time lighting framework.

#### **21. Communication from the Leader**

To receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may wish to bring before the Council and to consider the recommendation of the Leader on how such communications should be dealt with.

#### **22. Correspondence**

To receive any correspondence received (if applicable).

##### **a) Remote attendance and proxy voting in local authorities: consultation results and government response**

To receive notice of the results and conclusion of the Government's consultation on remote and hybrid meetings. See link below for details:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/enabling-remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-at-local-authority-meetings/outcome/remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-in-local-authorities-consultation-results-and-government-response#conclusion-and-next-steps>



b) **Witney Chamber of Commerce Survey Results** (Pages 150 - 218)

To receive the results and analysis of an online survey conducted in and around Witney by the Witney Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with Witney Town Council earlier this year.

This item will be considered fully at the scheduled meeting of the Stronger Communities Committee on 14 July but Members may raise any points for consideration at this juncture.

c) **Police & Crime Commissioner - Newsletters**

To receive the April & March newsletters from the Thames Valley Police, Police & Crime Commissioner:

[April 2025](#)

[May 2025](#)

d) **Police & Crime Commissioner - Neighbouring Policing Engagement Survey** (Pages 219 - 221)

To receive additional correspondence from the Police & Crime Commissioner with a request for completion of the Neighbouring Policing Engagement Survey.

23. **Questions to the Leader of the Council**

Questions to the Leader of the Council concerning the business of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 15.

24. **Sealing of Documents**

To receive details of documents sealed by the Council.

Date	No of Seal	Nature of Document
29 April 2025	98	Tenancy at will – Courtside Hubs CIC re: Leys Recreation Ground
29 April 2025	99	Licence for alterations relating to land forming part of land on the northwest side of Station Lane – Courtside Hubs CIC



Town Clerk

**Members Interests & Registration Of Gifts & Hospitality**

Members are reminded that any changes to the register of interests previously completed by them or any registration of Gifts or Hospitality received which exceed £50 should be reported to the Town Clerk **within 28 days** of the occurrence.



**ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING OF  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Wednesday, 7 May 2025**

**At 7.01 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney**

**Present:**

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	D Temple
	O Collins	G Doughty
	R Smith	J Doughty
	R Crouch	J Robertshaw
	D Newcombe	D Edwards-Hughes
	D Enright	T Ashby
	S Simpson	A Mubin
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	9 members of the public.	

*Prior to the commencement of the official business the outgoing Mayor Cllr O Collins thanked all that had provided support to him during the two years he had held the position and provided a summary of activities he had participated in.*

*Following this the Reverend Dr Hester Jones blessed the Town Council for the year ahead.*

**241     ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR 2025/26**

Following the appointment of Cllr A Bailey as Mayor-Elect at the meeting of the Council on 14 April 2025, the Chair invited any further nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year and none were forthcoming.

All members were in agreement. Cllr A Bailey was therefore nominated and duly elected Chair/Mayor by the Council.

**Resolved:**

1. That, Cllr Andy Bailey be elected Town Mayor/Chair of Witney Town Council for the ensuing municipal year 2025/26 and,
2. That, the Declaration of Acceptance of Office be signed following the meeting in the presence of the Proper Officer of the Council.

242 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR 2025/26**

The new Chair invited nominations for the position of Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year. Cllr J Doughty was nominated and duly elected Deputy Mayor by the Council.

**Resolved:**

1. That, Cllr Jane Doughty be elected Deputy Town Mayor/Chair of Witney Town Council for the ensuing municipal year 2025/26 and,
2. That, the Declaration of Acceptance of Office be signed following the meeting in the presence of the Proper Officer of the Council.

243 **DESIGNATION OF MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN**

Following her appointment to the position of Team Rector of the parish, Members officially welcomed Rev'd Dr Hester Jones to Witney. The Rector was usually appointed Mayor's Chaplain and provided pastoral and ecclesiastical guidance to the Mayor and the Town Council.

**Resolved:**

That, Rev'd Dr Hester Jones be designated Mayor's Chaplain.

244 **ELECTION OF LEADER 2025/26**

The Chair invited nominations for the position of Leader of the Town Council. Cllr R Smith was nominated and elected by the Council.

**Resolved:**

That, Cllr Ruth Smith be elected as the Leader of the Town Council for the ensuing municipal year 2025/26.

*Eight Members of the Public left the meeting at 7:19pm*

245 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY LEADER 2025/26**

The Chair invited nominations for the position of Deputy Leader of the Town Council. Cllr J Aitman was nominated and elected by the Council.

**Resolved:**

That, Cllr Joy Aitman be elected as the Deputy Leader of the Town Council for the ensuing municipal year 2024/25

246 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Treloar and G Meadows.

247 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

*At this point in the meeting, and with the permission of the Chair, the Town Clerk/CEO addressed the Council regarding recent conduct concerns, particularly highlighting three complaints stemming from social media activity around the Oxfordshire County Council elections. The Town Clerk emphasised that such incidents negatively impacted staff wellbeing, divert resources from Council priorities, and damage the Council's collective reputation. Members were reminded of their commitment to the Civility and Respect pledge adopted in October 2022 and were urged to revisit the Councillor Code of Conduct which was reviewed at agenda item 16(c). The Town Clerk encouraged participation in available training and stressed that public service required Members to maintain appropriate conduct in all interactions, including online communications in order to foster a respectful working environment and preserve public trust.*

248 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the ordinary Council meeting held on 14 April 2025 were received.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 April 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

249 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

250 **APPOINTMENT OF ANY NEW COMMITTEES**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which provided details of the current Council Committees.

Members discussed the proposed separation of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee and agreed on the establishment of a new Climate & Biodiversity Committee along with a Planning & Development Committee. This would allow the Council to focus on its target of being carbon neutral by 2028.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, separate Climate & Biodiversity and Planning & Development Committees be established.

251 **ADOPTION OF MEETINGS CALENDAR**

The Council received the updated proposed calendar of meetings, including changes to incorporate the newly established Climate & Biodiversity Committee.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the calendar of Council meetings for 2025/26 be adopted.

252 **REVIEW (OR REQUEST FOR THE TOWN CLERK TO REVIEW) ANY TERMS OF REFERENCE**

There were no changes to the current Terms of Reference for Committees as changes to the structure had been proposed at this meeting. Members were advised each committee would also have the opportunity to review their remits at their first meetings.

253 **SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

As changes to Committees had been proposed, officers advised this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

**Resolved:**

That, the Scheme of delegation be reviewed at the meeting of the Council on 23 June 2025.

254 **APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES & WORKING PARTIES AND THE ELECTION OF CHAIRS**

Members received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk and considered appointments to standing committees, sub committees, working parties and task & finish groups. In addition, the Chairs were also elected at this juncture. The following appointments were proposed, seconded, and agreed unanimously:

Planning & Development Committee

G Doughty (Chair)	D Temple
J Aitman	G Meadows
J Doughty	R Smith

Climate & Biodiversity Committee

S Simpson (Chair)	D Newcombe
D Enright	A Bailey
A Mubin	R Smith
J Treloar	J Robertshaw

Parks & Recreation Committee

J Aitman (Chair)	J Doughty
D Edwards- Hughes	S Simpson
J Treloar	R Smith
T Ashby	A Bailey

Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments

R Crouch (Chair)	J Treloar
G Doughty	D Temple
J Robertshaw	R Smith
A Bailey	O Collins

Stronger Communities Committee

T Ashby (Chair)	D Enright
G Meadows	A Bailey
R Smith	A Mubin
D Edwards-Hughes	J Treloar

Policy Governance And Finance Committee

R Smith (Chair)	A Bailey
J Aitman	R Crouch
S Simpson	G Doughty
T Ashby	J Doughty

Personnel Sub- Committee

R Smith (Chair)	A Bailey
J Aitman	R Crouch
D Newcombe	G Doughty
T Ashby	J Doughty

Disciplinary & Grievance Panel

D Enright	O Collins
T Ashby	D Temple

Community Voices (was Inclusivity & Diversity Panel)

R Smith	T Ashby
J Aitman	R Crouch
S Simpson	G Doughty

VE/VJ-Day 80th Anniversaries Task & Finish Group

J Robertshaw	J Treloar
J Aitman	O Collins
G Meadows	R Crouch

Community Governance Task & Finish Group

O Collins	R Smith
A Bailey	G Meadows
S Simpson	R Crouch
D Edwards-Hughes	

Pavilion Working Party

R Crouch	D Newcombe
R Smith	G Doughty
J Aitman	

Members unanimously agreed that the Christmas Lights Working Party and Youth Council Task & Finish Groups could be disbanded as their tasks had been successfully completed.

**Resolved:**

1. That the report be noted and,
2. That the membership of the standing committees, sub committees, working parties and task & finish groups and their Chairs be agreed as detailed above and,
3. That the Christmas Lights Working Party and Youth Council Task & Finish Group be disbanded.

*Cllr T Ashby left the meeting at 7:34pm.*

255 **APPOINTMENT TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES & EXTERNAL BODIES/OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning nominations for advisory committees and external bodies/outside organisations.

The Chair sought nominations for vacancies on outside organisations all to serve until the Annual Council Meeting following the next ordinary election in 2027.

Witney Traffic Advisory Committee	J Aitman, D Enright S Simpson R Smith
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils [Larger Councils]	R Crouch
West Witney Sports & Social Club	D Newcombe R Smith
Witney Town Band	O Collins
Witney & District Twinning Association	A Bailey (Mayor) R Crouch R Smith
West Oxfordshire Museum Centre	O Collins
St Mary's Church Preservation Trust	A Bailey (Mayor)
Volunteer Link Up	J Aitman
RAF Brize Norton – Local Consultation Working Group	D Newcombe
Witney Allotment Association	R Crouch



Witney Youth Council Mentors	G Meadows S Simpson J Aitman
Friends of the Cemeteries	D Enright J Doughty
Home Start Champions	J Aitman A Bailey S Simpson
Lower Windrush Valley Project	A Bailey
West Oxfordshire Community Transport	D Enright
Witney Fair Trade Action Group Champion	R Smith
Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group	R Smith D Enright
Witney Community Profile Steering Group	J Aitman
Witney Flood Group Liaison	J Robertshaw

Nominees Serving as Trustees

The following were proposed as Town Council nominees to serve on outside bodies for a four-year term of office.

Witney Town Hall Charity	Mr H Eaglestone
Witney Town Charity	Cllr J Aitman
Witney Education Foundation (WEF)	Cllr S Simpson

**Resolved:**

1. That the report be noted and,
2. That the appointments to advisory committees & external bodies/outside nominations be agreed as detailed above.

256 **STANDING ORDERS**

The Council received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which outlined the updating and significant redesign based on the National Association of Local Council's 2025 model version.

The updates referred to sections on code of conduct and financial controls; the remaining information was updated wording but by adopting these Standing Orders the Council would remain compliant with legislation.

Members unanimously agreed to approve the proposed changes and adjourn them until the meeting of the Council on 23 June 2025 in order to allow sufficient time for Members to review and reflect on the revisions before discussing further.

In response to a Member's question, the Town Clerk advised Councillors of the difference in voting rights if attending as a substitute or a guest of a Committee.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, that the proposed standing orders be approved but stand adjourned until the meeting of the Full Council on 23 June 2025.

257 **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the Council's financial regulations had been reviewed by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> April and stood adjourned for adoption at the meeting on 9 June 2025.

**Resolved:**

That, the Council note that the current Financial Regulations are under review and stand adjourned until the meeting of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 9 June 2025.

258 **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Council received the Council's Current Code of Conduct and unanimously agreed that it should be reaffirmed.

**Resolved:**

That, the Council's Code of Conduct be re-adopted.

259 **COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE 2024-25**

The Council received an annual attendance register for Members of the Council for the 2024/25 municipal year.

The Leader of the Council along with Cllr D Edwards-Hughes thanked Members for their attendances and highlighted that it should be understood when viewing such figures that many factors influenced an individual Councillor's attendance such as illness and family or dependent commitments.

**Resolved:**

That, the annual attendance registers for 2024/25 be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 7.55 pm

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Chair

# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 8a

## CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 25 March 2025

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting via MS Teams - Virtual Meeting

### **Present:**

Councillor G Meadows (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillors:	A Bailey	G Doughty
	T Ashby	J Doughty
	J Aitman	R Smith
	S Simpson	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Cara Murray	Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning
Others:	None.	

### P174 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies of absence.

The Chair, Cllr A Bailey had advised he would have connectivity issues so relinquished the Chairship to the Vice-Chair, Cllr G Meadows ahead of the meeting.

### P175 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr R Smith and Cllr T Ashby declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in application 25/00322/LBC as the applicant was known to them.

### P176 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

### P177 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

#### **Resolved:**

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P178 **NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL DECISION - 65 WINFIELD DRIVE, OX29 7AU - APP/D3125/D/24/3355711**

The Committee received and considered correspondence concerning the appeal decision APP/D3125/D/24/3355711 for 65 Winfield Drive, Witney.

**Resolved:**

That, the appeal decision be noted.

P179 **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE**

The Committee received correspondence regarding the West Oxfordshire District Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) draft charging schedule.

A Member advised this update was referring to the feasibility of developer contributions and what rates should be set to ensure developments took place, but that the community received adequate funds for infrastructure.

**Resolved:**

That, the correspondence be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 6.37 pm

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Chair





#### Flood Risk, Drainage & Water Environment

There are concerns regarding the adequacy of the current drainage systems and the potential impact of the development on these systems. Specifically, Members have raised the issue of increased surface water runoff and the risk of exacerbating drainage problems on Dry Lane, Crawley and Bridget Street, Witney. It is imperative that a detailed drainage strategy is provided to demonstrate that the development will not negatively impact local infrastructure or increase flooding risks in the surrounding area. Standing water and flooding have been highlighted as significant concerns. Members request that the development plan thoroughly addresses how water runoff will be managed and that measures to prevent further standing water issues, which could worsen flooding in the area, are included. A comprehensive assessment of the potential flood risk, including an updated flood risk report, should be provided as part of the EIA.

#### Ground Conditions and Contamination

Members have expressed concerns regarding the potential for contamination, particularly following flooding events. Given the site's history and vulnerability to flooding, there is a need to assess how floodwaters might interact with the land and any associated contamination risks. A detailed flood risk assessment, including modelling and an environmental impact study, should be undertaken to evaluate this risk fully.

Additionally, there are concerns about the land's quality due to its previous agricultural use. The site has historically been used for agricultural purposes, which may have led to contamination from the use of pesticides, fertilizers, chemicals, and other industrial activities. Members are particularly concerned about the potential for soil contamination and its impact on the health and safety of future occupants. A comprehensive land quality survey should be conducted to assess any contamination, and if identified, appropriate remediation measures should be proposed.

#### Built Heritage and Archaeology

The Council acknowledges that the development site includes a historic barn. Therefore, scoping should be undertaken to assess and address the potential impacts of the proposed development on this important historical and cultural asset.

#### Socio Economics

Given the prospect of imminent local government devolution, this should be considered as part of any parish boundary changes that may result from an accompanying community governance review. The socio-economic impact of the development, including its potential effects on local health, quality of life, social cohesion, and well-being, should be assessed. In addition, the impact on access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and housing should be examined, with an evaluation of whether existing infrastructure and services can accommodate the anticipated demand.

In light of the concerns raised, Members strongly request that the applicant undertakes a comprehensive investigation into these matters as part of the EIA, with full consideration of the potential impacts on both land quality and local infrastructure. It is vital that these investigations are conducted in line with current environmental and planning policies to ensure a safe, sustainable, and well-planned development.

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177- 9	WTC/038/25	Plot Ref :-25/00663/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-		Date Received :-	20/03/2025
	Location :-	30 SCHOFIELD AVENUE SCHOFIELD AVENUE	Date Returned :-	26/03/2025
	Proposal :	Demolition of existing conservatory and construction of new single storey rear extension.		

Observations : Witney Town Council does not object to this application; however, Members note the increased footprint and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

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The Meeting closed at : 6:37pm

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Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council



# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 8b

## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Tuesday, 13 May 2025**

**At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting via MS Teams - Virtual Meeting**

### **Present:**

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	R Smith
	J Doughty	D Temple
	G Meadows	
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Cara Murray	Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning
Others:	None	

### **P274 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

### **P275 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

### **P276 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed that Councillor J Aitman or G Meadows be elected, a vote was taken with the result being four votes in favour of Cllr Aitman and two votes in favour of Cllr Meadows.

There being no other nominations it was:

#### **Resolved:**

That, Councillor J Aitman be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

*Cllr G Meadows left the meeting at 18:11pm.*

### **P277 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

P278 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

**Resolved:**

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

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The meeting closed at: 6.30 pm

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Chair



278- 5	WTC/057/25	Plot Ref :-25/01012/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	01/05/2025
	Location :-	10 TUNGSTEN PARK, COLLETTS WAY COLLETTS WAY	Date Returned :-	14/05/2025
	Proposal :	Provision of 4 additional windows to the Northern Eastern flank elevation to match existing.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections to this application and considers that the proposed development would enhance working conditions within the unit though the increase in natural daylight thus reducing the use of artificial lighting. Members support improvements that contribute positively to the functionality and usability of existing commercial or industrial spaces.		
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278- 6	WTC/058/25	Plot Ref :-25/01011/LBC	Type :-	LISTED BUI
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	01/05/2025
	Location :-	24 MARKET SQUARE MARKET SQUARE	Date Returned :-	14/05/2025
	Proposal :	'Like for like' making good and redecoration works to front elevation including DOFF stonework clean.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections to this application and welcomes the proposed improvements to this historical building. Members support sympathetic developments that contribute to the preservation and enhancement of Witney's architectural heritage and considers this application to be a positive step towards maintaining the character and integrity of the building.		
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278- 7	WTC/059/25	Plot Ref :-25/01071/ADV	Type :-	ADVERTISED
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	01/05/2025
	Location :-	1ST FLOOR UNIT 1 DES ROCHES SQ DES ROCHES SQUARE	Date Returned :-	14/05/2025
	Proposal :	Erection of two fascia signs and window graphics.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		
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278- 8	WTC/060/25	Plot Ref :-25/01051/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	01/05/2025
	Location :-	34 WILMOT CLOSE WILMOT CLOSE	Date Returned :-	14/05/2025
	Proposal :	Demolition of existing porch and erection of single storey front extension.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council does not object to this application; however, Members note the increased footprint and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.		
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278- 9	WTC/061/25	Plot Ref :-25/01085/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	01/05/2025
	Location :-	97 COGGES HILL ROAD COGGES HILL ROAD	Date Returned :-	14/05/2025
	Proposal :	Conversion and first floor extension of garage to create ancillary accommodation.		

Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections to this application in principle. However, Members request that a condition be attached to any approval to confirm the use of the accommodation will remain ancillary to the main property.

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The Meeting closed at : 6:30pm

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Tuesday, 3 June 2025  
At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney**

### **Present:**

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	R Smith
	J Doughty	D Temple
	G Meadows	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Cara Murray	Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning
Others:	None	

### **P311 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

### **P312 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

### **P313 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meeting held on 22 April and the new Planning & Development Committee meeting on 13 May 2025 were received.

### **Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meeting held on 22 April and the new Planning & Development Committee meeting on 13 May 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

### **P314 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

### **P315 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding changes to the Committee Terms of Reference along with a verbal update confirming the remit of Committee.

Members were unanimous in agreement with the proposed changes, some of which had arisen due to the Council decision to establish a separate Climate & Biodiversity Committee.

Members asked that an amendment to be made to (e) so as to include consideration for water and therefore read as:

To consider the impact on the green and water environments, ecosystems and biodiversity of all planning applications and comment in the name of the Council accordingly.

**Recommendation:**

1. That, Objective (e) be amended to read as noted above and,
2. That, the amended Terms of Reference be presented for approval by Full Council on 23 June 2025.

**P316 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

**Resolved:**

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

**P317 PLANNING DECISIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning decisions received from West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC).

The Committee Clerk summarised the reasoning for the decisions that were contrary to the Committee's submission.

**Resolved:**

That, the list circulated advising of WODC planning decisions be noted.

**P318 APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE - SA SPAZA SUPPLIES UK LTD, 38B HIGH STREET, WITNEY**

The Committee received the application from SA Spaza Supplies UK Ltd, 38b High Street, Witney for a new premises licence.

The Committee had no objections to the licensing application. Members welcomed and were pleased to support the expansion to this new diverse small business.

**Resolved:**

That, the Council makes no objection to this application.

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The meeting closed at: 6.15 pm

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Chair





**CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Tuesday, 20 May 2025**

**At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney**

**Present:**

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	D Enright	R Smith
	D Newcombe	J Treloar
	J Robertshaw	J Aitman (In place of D Enright)
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Janine Sparrowhawk	Compliance & Environment Officer
	Carl Whitehead	Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer
Others:	None.	

**CB290 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Enright, A Bailey & A Mubin.

Councillors J Aitman, G Meadows and T Ashby attended as substitutes respectively.

**CB291 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

**CB292 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor J Aitman and seconded by Councillor R Smith that Councillor D Enright be elected.

An additional proposal was made by Councillor J Treloar, seconded by Councillor T Ashby that Councillor J Robertshaw be elected.

There being no other nominations a vote was taken with the result being:

Councillor D Enright	Four Votes
Councillor J Robertshaw	Three Votes

There was one abstention.

**Resolved:**

That, Councillor Duncan Enright be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

**CB293 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

**CB294 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Council outlining the terms of reference for the Committee.

A Member requested that (f) be amended to include the word “Promote” and therefore read as:

(f) To explore and promote the expansion of community energy to keep the benefits of our local energy generation in our local economy.

Additionally, a Member asked that “Local Oxfordshire Organisations” be added to (d) and therefore read as:

(d) To engage with Central Government, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, local Oxfordshire Organisations, relevant stake holders and other organisations to initiate local action on climate change (towards achieving net zero carbon emissions) air & water pollution, and other environmental issues within the town.

It was proposed by Cllr J Aitman, seconded by Cllr G Meadows that the terms of reference be adopted with the above amendments. Members were unanimous in agreement.

In response to a Member’s question, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that matters of Flooding mitigation would be dealt under the Planning & Development Committee’s Terms of reference as it was considered infrastructure. Flooding events and larger flooding issued would be referred to Full Council.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Terms of Reference including the above suggested changes be recommended for approval by the Full Council at the meeting of 23 June 2025.

**CB295 BIODIVERSITY & GREEN SPACES UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer (B&GSO).

Members heard that the B&GSO was pleased to see the establishment of a dedicated Committee which he hoped would help to reinforce the work which had resulted in the award reorganisations the Council had received, these were in respect of the Lake & Country Park and further lead to greater opportunities for grant funding applications and for an application in early 2026 for local wildlife site status.

He updated the Committee regarding his and the newly promoted Park Ranger's recent progress and activity which included water testing, a furniture review, increase of noticeboard and information boards across the sites, greater volunteer interest, work to improve over 700 metres of pathway as well as having gained permission to raise pathways to reduce flooding risks.

The B&GSO responded to Members' questions regarding the results of the bank stabilisation work already carried out and that which was planned for the future, action taken and plans for the introduction of wildflower sites across the town, and ongoing water testing at the convergence of Colwell Brook and lake.

The offer of a walk with the B&SGO and Park Ranger was offered, Members agreed that this should be extended to all Councillors ideally to take place ahead of the Witney Carnival on 9<sup>th</sup> July so that Members were well informed.

The B&GSO confirmed that a written report would be submitted to the Committee at the next meeting.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Officers to issue invites to Councillors to participate in a walk with the B&GSO and Park Ranger.

**CB296 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY & CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer (C&EO).

Members welcomed the summary report that had been provided and the Compliance & Environment Officer to the new role.

A Member raised concern of the cost of making retrofit and upgrades however recognised that a solid plan would allow the Council to plan effectively to strive to reach its goals.

In response to a Member's question regarding the promotion of schemes to benefit the community, the Deputy Town Clerk reminded the Committee of its remit and that as a Town Council the resources were limited however there was nothing stopping the Council promoting a wide scope of District, County and Government lead schemes to Witney residents and businesses as highlighted in Phase 3 & 4 of the roadmap provided by the C&EO.

The Chair raised the idea of hosting an event in the Council's buildings to facilitate and bring together community and support organisations in order to help educate and promote schemes and grant schemes that may be available.

Lastly, Members considered the recommendation to establish a working party in order to help expediate discussions with Officers who would be drafting the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. It was agreed that an offer be made to all Council Members to join the working party at the next meeting of the Full Council.

Members were unanimous in agreement with all the recommendations made in the report.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers produce a detailed roadmap following the completion of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and,
3. That, the idea of a Climate roadshow event be investigated by Officers and,
4. That, a Climate Action Working Part be established, and its membership be agreed at the meeting of the Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 and,
5. That, this Committee be provided with regular updates of the Working Party.

**CB297 COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee received the detailed report of the Town Clerk/CEO concerning the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 20x25/26.

Members noted that the Objectives mirrored the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer and therefore outlined the major elements of the roadmap that the Committee should focus on.

The Committee were unanimous in acceptance of the recommendations which included the already agreed establishment of a Working Party.

**Resolved:**

That, the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2025/26 be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 6.55 pm

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Chair

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 12 May 2025**

**At 6.03 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney**

**Present:**

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

Councillors:	S Simpson	D Edwards-Hughes
	A Bailey	R Smith
	J Doughty	J Treloar
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	3 members of the public.	

**PR260 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor T Ashby, Councillor G Doughty attended as a substitute.

**PR261 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

**PR262 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr R Smith and seconded by Cllr J Treloar that Cllr S Simpson be elected. There being no other nominations it was:

**Resolved:**

That, Councillor Sandra Simpson be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

**PR263 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 10 March 2025 were received.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 10 March 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

PR264 **PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC**

*The Committee adjourned for this item.*

The Committee received representations from Members of Witney Wolves Basketball Club concerning Agenda Item 10

*The Committee reconvened.*

*During the following item:*

*Cllr J Treloar left the meeting at 6:08pm rejoining at 6:10pm*

*Cllr D Edwards-Hughes left the meeting at 6:35pm rejoining at 6:38pm.*

PR265 **WITNEY BASKETBALL**

With the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the members of public could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk as to the current position of the provision for Basketball in Witney. Members had earlier heard from the members of the Witney Wolves Basketball Club of their own lived experiences.

It was clear to the Committee that the available basketball facilities were either of poor standard or non-existent, with particular issues around access to an acceptable indoor court, notably Windrush Leisure Centre. This resulted in the club currently having to play at Carterton leisure centre which came at a significant higher hire cost as their regular indoor court at Wood Green School was unavailable at times for example at exam periods. The Club had also had to host games and training sessions across multiple locations to satisfy the desire of their 60-80 players.

The Town Clerk confirmed that following an earlier exploratory meeting with the club held in April 2025, the Town Council had passed information to West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), the club thanked the Town Council for this and reported that WODC had been in contact and a time to meet was being arranged.

Members also discussed the various ways it could help raise the profile and assistance to help improve the facilities, including the court, colloquially known as "The Cage" situated behind the Oxfordshire County Council Family Centre on Witan Way, which provided a centrally located outdoor court. It was thought that this area was owned and under the responsibility of OCC however attempts by the club to enter discussions had failed. It was agreed that Officers would look to obtain confirmation and enter discussions as to the potential for improvement to be made.

Other ideas to provide support were to consider the inclusion of basketball courts/hoops in the design of multi-use games areas, financial support for summer holiday youth sessions, integration with The Station detached youth provision, collaborations with Witney Hockey Club and use of the WODC Spacehive fundraising scheme.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,

2. That, Officers establish the ownership of the outdoor court on Witan Way and,
3. That, Officers explore options to support the promotion and improve the provision of Basketball in Witney.

**PR266 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which outlined the current Terms of Reference for the Committee along with changes for consideration.

Following the Members discussions, it was agreed that the following amendments and additions be made:

That the wording of (c) be amended to read “To keep under review/updated the sports strategy within the Council’s adopted Open Spaces Strategy to meet the changing needs of the community, sporting governing bodies recommendations and West Oxfordshire District Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy in the Local Plan.

That (d) and (e) be amended as noted in the report.

That two additional terms be added and read:

(f) Within all its decision making ensure that the green environment and biodiversity of public open spaces is protected and enhanced in line with the Council’s Climate Emergency aspirations.

(g) To oversee any development and investment of Council owned recreation ground sites and its supporting infrastructure meets the needs of the community, ensuring they remain safe and compliant

That the current Terms of Reference (f) and (g) be relisted as (h) and (i).

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and
2. That, the amendments noted above be made and
3. That, the recommended changes be approved at the meeting of the Council on 23 June 2025.

**PR267 COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee received the tabled report of the Town Clerk/CEO along with a verbal update concerning the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2025/26.

Following the discussions regarding the provision for Basketball in Witney it was agreed that an objective be added.

To support the development of basketball provision in Witney by:

- (i) Collaborating with Oxfordshire County Council on the future of ‘the Cage’ facility at Witan Way to explore opportunities for Witney Wolves Basketball Club to establish a home base; and
- (ii) Reviewing existing Witney Town Council-owned recreational facilities and planned projects to assess and integrate provision for basketball where appropriate.

In response to a Member's query regarding the capacity of Officers to manage and deliver what was a significant portfolio of projects, the Head of Estates & Operations confirmed the team were ambitious and looking forward to bringing about the completion of the projects for the town.

**Resolved:**

1. That, an objective be added to support the development of basketball provision in Witney by:
  - (i) Collaborating with Oxfordshire County Council on the future of 'the Cage' facility at Witan Way to explore opportunities for Witney Wolves Basketball Club to establish a home base; and
  - (ii) Reviewing existing Witney Town Council-owned recreational facilities and planned projects to assess and integrate provision for basketball where appropriate. be added and,
2. That, the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2025/26 be agreed.

**PR268 LEYS CRICKET UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager along with a verbal explanation from the Head of Estates & Operations (HE&O) which related to West Witney Sports & Social Club's cricket provision.

The HE&O explained that the table of costs was comprehensive however, as noted in the report, it did not include costs of equipment along with the proportion of costs that was spent during the football season. These cost calculations would continue to be worked on, and updated versions covering all costings would be made available to Members which would cover both Cricket and Football.

He also updated Members on the progress of the agreement with Swifts CC and confirmed it was hoped that the final agreement would be reached and signed in the coming weeks.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, updated cost calculations be provided to the Committee.

**PR269 UPDATE ON CRICKET PROVISION AT THE LEYS RECREATION GROUND**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Town Clerk/CEO in respect of the progression of discussions with the Oxfordshire Cricket Board and Henry Box School regarding the desire for an artificial wicket at The Leys Recreation Ground.

Oxfordshire Cricket Board had confirmed ongoing interest in reintroducing cricket at The Leys. This included a renewed expression of interest from Henry Box school in using a proposed artificial pitch on the field adjacent to their premises, and general support from the OCB for facilitating cricket activities—including All Stars and women's sessions—once construction works at Courtside are completed. The OCB had emphasised that, due to the ongoing construction and the lack of available changing facilities, it had not been feasible to resume cricket activities during the current summer season.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal update be noted.



*During the following item:  
Cllr J Treloar left the meeting at 7:13pm rejoining at 7:16pm*

**PR270 MAJOR STRATEGIC PROJECTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer regarding the major projects within the Town along with a verbal update from the Head of Estates & Operations (HE&O).

**The Leys Masterplan**

Members were concerned to hear of a further delay to the delivery of the renovations and the proposed period of closure of the Skatepark however, they appreciated Officers actions to ensure that Courtside Hubs continued to provide regular clear communication and updates.

The Committee welcomed that the Splashpark was to be delivered ahead of time as had the skatepark, further adding to their confidence in the new operations and projects team. Members remarked on the positive comments they had received from residents who had closely watched the progress and looked forward to the official opening by the Mayor prior to the half term school holidays.

**Raleigh Crescent Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)**

Members received an illustration which depicted the potential for the new MUGA and were reminded of the need for confidentiality due to the commercial sensitivity of the document.

They heard progress had been slower than Officers would like to have seen, due to the number of projects West Oxfordshire District Council had in flight. Officers explained that due to the Section 106 funds held by WODC, it had to be included in the tender process however, it was thought that once the tender was awarded it could move with more pace under the project management of the Town Council.

**West Witney – Portaloo**

The Town Clerk/CEO provided an update on the grant made by the Council to facilitate the use of toilets within the West Witney Sports & Social Club by parkrun. An issue had arisen regarding parkrun gaining access as was believed to be agreed. The Town Clerk/CEO would be investigating further with the Social Club to resolve.

**Resolved:**

That, the report and verbal updates be noted.

**PR271 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved:**

That in accordance with section (1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

**PR272 PROJECT UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer.

The Head of Estates & Operation answered Members' questions regarding welfare provisions, insulation and cycle storage provision.

The report had outlined the building of the new works depot would be over one storey, rather than two storeys and would provide a saving of approximately £10,000 - £20,000 however, Members agreed that the additional storey would provide additional storage space and future proof the Council given the proposed changes to local government responsibilities with anticipated devolution.

Members were unanimously in agreement with proceeding with the option of building the new work depot with two storeys.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers proceed with plans for construction of a new two storey works depot.

**PR273 FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer regarding the West Witney Clubhouse renovation project and the option to tax to ensure that Value Added Tax (VAT) would be able to be reclaimed.

Members heard that the Council would be taking professional advice ahead of progressing further to confirm the plan. The Committee was unanimous in support.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Council engage professional services to advise on whether to opt-to-tax the West Witney Clubhouse and,
3. That, a budget for professional services be set at £5,000 and
4. That, authority be delegated to the Town Clerk/CEO to implement the above actions.

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The meeting closed at: 7.43 pm

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Chair

**HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 19 May 2025**

**At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney**

**Present:**

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	J Treloar	G Doughty
	J Robertshaw	D Temple
	R Smith	G Meadows (In place of O Collins)
	A Bailey	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Angus Whitburn	Operations Manager
	Thomas Davies	Deputy Venue & Events Officer
Others:	None.	

**H279 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor O Collins, Councillor G Meadows attended as a substitute.

**H280 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

**H281 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor J Treloar or O Collins be elected. There being no other nominations a vote was taken. The result being unanimous in favour of Councillor Treloar.

**Resolved:**

That, Councillor J Treloar be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

**H282 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 17 March 2025 were received.

H154 – The Town Clerk reported that Witney Allotment Association had been written to requesting that they update their waiting list. Whilst a response had been received from WAA North a response was awaited from the overarching WAA Committee detailing the full position of all allotment sites

**Resolved:**

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 17 March 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

**H283 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*The Committee adjourned for this item.*

The Committee received representations from two members of Witney Allotment Association South Sub-Committee concerning Agenda Item 11.

The Town Clerk read a statement forwarded by the Site Representative of Lakeside Allotments which detailed their thoughts on the officer's report to be considered under agenda item 11.

Additionally, the allotment members present thanked the Committee for their consideration of the options regarding flooding at Lakeside allotments.

*The Committee reconvened.*

**H284 LAKESIDE FLOODING OPTIONS**

With the permission of the Chair, the item was moved up the agenda so that the members of public present could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager as well as hearing earlier the words of the Site Representative for Lakeside Allotments and the two Members of WWA-South who were present.

Following on, Members discussed the specifics of the proposals with questions regarding the layout, ditch orientation and flow levels of the various water courses being answered by the Operations Manager.

Although the Committee sympathised with the allotment holders' frustration about flooding, potentially involving sewage water, it was mutually agreed by all present that the allotments were situated on a flood plain. There was no simple or inexpensive solution to the issue which had appeared to worsen in recent years. Some plots were unusable in the winter, and the viability of the soil and the longevity of any mitigation was unknown.

The Committee was unanimous in agreement to decline both recommendations in the report in favour of alternative proposals.

It was therefore proposed by Cllr A Bailey and seconded by Cllr J Treloar that the Council developed a strategy to engage with Thames Water and other interested parties to review the

issues being experienced. In particular a request be made to Windrush Against Sewage Pollution to provide the historical flow rates of Colwell Brook. Members were unanimous in support.

Additionally, Members further agreed to review an earlier topographical survey regarding hydrology movement. If any further survey work was found to be needed, then Officers should review and report back to the Committee.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report and verbal contributions be noted and,
2. That, a strategy be developed to engage with Thames Water and interested parties and,
3. That, Officers investigate any additional hydrology survey work that may be required.

*The Members of the public left the meeting along with the Operations Manager at 6:45pm*

H285 **THE EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (EHRC) CONSULTATION - TOILET PROVISION IN PUBLIC HALLS**

With the permission of the Chair, the item was moved up the agenda.

The Committee had been asked to note the intention that EHRC were imminently to issue a public consultation following the Supreme Court ruling on the definition of "sex" under the Equality Act 2010 and to consider any implications for the provision of single-sex and staff toilet facilities at the Corn Exchange and other public halls.

A Member raised that these changes were mandatory for public bodies however, felt that Witney Town Council should highlight its concerns with regards to the practicalities of introducing changes.

The Committee was concerned that it was overreach to include toilet provisions in the guidance however, a solution to change the use of the disabled toilet would meet the requirements of the court ruling but it was a person's right to choose their sex, and it should not be viewed as a disability.

Cllr G Meadows proposed, and Cllr R Smith seconded that the Council consult with LGBTQ & disabled communities, who would be affected by the additional use of the designated toilet, prior to submission of a response from Witney Town Council by the Mayor, Leader of the Council, Cllr Meadows and Town Clerk. The Committee were unanimous in agreement with the proposal.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the Council enter a submission to highlight their concerns the formation of which be delegated to the Mayor, Leader, Cllr Meadows and the Town Clerk; and
2. That, the Council consult with groups prior to help inform its response.

*Cllr A Bailey left the meeting at 7:05pm*

H286 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

It was proposed by Cllr R Smith, seconded by Cllr J Robertshaw that the following recommended changes to the current Terms of Reference be made.

- (e) To oversee the management of Hailey Road, Lakeside, Newland and Windrush Place Allotments whilst leased to the Witney Allotment Association.

And that additionally the following new Terms of Reference be included:

- To oversee the development and management of the Corn Exchange (including the 1863 café bar) as a community hub and arts centre in line with the Council's vision and long-term business plan for the venue.
- Within all its decision making ensure that the green environment and biodiversity of public open spaces is protected and enhanced in line with the Council's Climate Emergency aspirations.
- To oversee any development and investment in Council-owned public halls, and the supporting infrastructure, ensuring they meet the needs of the community, remain safe and compliant.

Members were unanimous in agreement of the proposed changes.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the changes as noted above be made to the Terms of Reference and,
2. That, those changes be approved at the meeting of the Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.

H287 **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee received the detailed report of the Town Clerk/CEO along with a verbal update concerning the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2025/26.

No additional objectives or changes were request by Members.

**Resolved:**

That, the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2025/26 be noted.

H288 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of new Venue & Events Officer and offered him their best wishes.

The V&EO answered Members' questions which related to clarification of the maintenance of the charity clothes bank at Burwell Hall as well as outlining the need for changes to the Corn Exchange flag design to ensure these were more robust.

He further explained the importance of attendance from Councillors at the Advent Fayre on the 30 November in order that it could proceed without additional costs of staffing being incurred.

The Leader of the Council supported the V&EO comments and asked that all Councillor be written to highlight the importance of their support.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, all Councillors are advised of the Advent Fayre date and their need to support the event and,
3. That, Officers proceed with the recommendations to alter the style of banner.

H289 **CORN EXCHANGE BUSINESS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer which provided an update on the activity of the Corn Exchange events.

Members were pleased to receive the updated data on the attendance figures as requested by them previously and to hear of new events that were being established. including the summer outdoor music events which would return in conjunction with the fizzy Friday promotion.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the events staff for the hard work to ensure the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary VE Day celebrations were delivered smoothly.

**Resolved:**

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 7.25 pm

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Chair

**STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 2 June 2025**

**At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney**

**Present:**

Councillor T Ashby (Chair)

Councillors:	R Smith	D Enright
	G Meadows	A Mubin
	A Bailey	J Treloar
	D Edwards-Hughes	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	One member of the public.	

**SC298 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**SC299 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

**SC300 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 24 March 2025 were received.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 24 March 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

**SC301 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*The Committee adjourned for this item.*

The Chair welcomed Councillor Simon Watson from Carterton Town Council who was attended the meeting with a particular interest in Agenda Item 10 – Youth Council.

*The Committee reconvened.*



SC302 **YOUTH COUNCIL**

With the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda to allow the visiting Councillor from Carterton to hear the discussions.

The Deputy Town Clerk and Leader of the Council outlined the progress of the Youth Council to date explaining in brief how the Council has approached the re-establishment of the Youth Council. The recruitment had ensured it was open to all to apply and that each potential member had the opportunity of a face to face meeting to discuss what they wanted to achieve.

Overall, the Youth Council has been a great success with any challenges being overcome and objectives set.

The Committee then received the minutes of the meeting of the Youth Council on 28 April 2025 and were pleased to see that it would be active and participate with interaction at the upcoming Witney Carnival.

Members also heard of the upcoming visit from the Le Touquet Youth Council on 8 July 2025 and it was proposed with all Members in agreement that a budget be set to subsidise the costs of providing a takeaway meal and use of the Corn Exchange that day. Additionally, it was suggested that non Youth Council members be invited to participate in the meeting to encourage cultural bonds between the twinned towns.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the verbal updates be noted and,
2. That a budget for a reception meal be considered by Policy, Governance & Finance at their meeting of 9 June 2025 and,
3. That, the minutes of the Youth Council meeting held 28 April 2025 be noted.

SC303 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr J Treloar and seconded by Cllr T Ashby that Councillor D Edwards-Hughes be elected.

An additional proposal was made for the election of Cllr G Meadows by Cllr D Enright which was seconded by Cllr R Smith. There being no other nominations a vote was taken:

In favour of Cllr Edwards-Hughes	Four
In favour of Cllr Meadows	Four

The Chair exercised his casting vote in favour of Cllr Edwards-Hughes.

**Resolved:**

That, Councillor David Edwards-Hughes be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

**SC304 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the terms of reference for the Committee.

Members welcomed the suggested amendments and additions in the report which highlighted the Council's commitment to equality and engagement.

**Recommended:**

That, the Committee terms of reference be updated to include all suggestions in the report and recommended for Council approval on 23 June.

**SC305 COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee received the detailed report of the Town Clerk/CEO along with a verbal update concerning the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2025/26

The Deputy Town Clerk advised clarity would be provided to Members in respect of the quoted £40,000 at a later date.

In response to a question, Members reflected on the support the Council may provide to Witney Chamber of Commerce (WCoC) and the towns businesses in general following submission or results from a survey they had held earlier in the year, and due for discussion at the next meeting. It was noted that there were already several objectives included in the report and that the Town Council could work to explore these opportunities further.

The Mayor confirmed that her was due to meet with the Chairman of WCoC later that week to discuss their needs.

Later in the meeting when the Committee considered Agenda Item 9b – Annual Resident Satisfaction Survey – it was agreed that an objective be added to review the need for an indoor meeting venue for young people.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2025/26 be noted and
2. That, additional clarity of the amounts of Youth Service and Community Transport Grant be provided to Members and,
3. That, an objective be set to review in conjunction with The Station and Courtside Hubs for provision of an indoor meeting venue for Young People.

**SC306 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer, with the points in the report being summarised by the Chair.

Members agreed that West Oxfordshire District Council be contacted in respect of the Welcome to Witney guide so that the Town Council could help promote the work being carried out by them as part of their wayfinding project.

The Committee considered the press coverage and asked that Officers ensure that press releases were issued whenever possible; Members were disappointed to hear that even when provided with a press release this had not necessary lead to publication as had been the case with the 80<sup>th</sup> VE Anniversary celebrations and the opening of the refurbished Splashpark, both of which would have illustrated and educated residents on the work of the Town Council.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers issues a press release when relevant and continue to monitor inclusion in the press.

**SC307 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer, again the points in the report were summarised by the Chair following thanks and pride in the management and facilitation of the excellent VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary events in Witney.

Members welcomed the news that The Station would attend to the next meeting of the Committee and provide their 3-year plan.

In respect of the Witney Carnival, the Committee considered their participation in the procession event with mixed interest. Members were reminded of the positive feedback received following the 2024 event which helped to show the Councils “human side”. It was agreed a decision be made by 9 June. However, the Committee noted the participation of the Youth Council and looked forward to supporting them on the Council stand.

Members were unanimous in agreement that the Town Council facilitate a Climate event to highlight the work of local organisations and Council bodies, additionally the Committee agreed that promotion of heritage events, walks, and activities be promoted such as those arranged by Witney Museum to coincide with Heritage Open Days.

The Committee heard from the Chair who highlighted the work of the Community insight Profile Steering Group and encouraged Members to engage with the group.

The Chair would

follow up with his Oxfordshire County Council contacts and also investigate how the Town Council could potentially get more involved.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Council decide whether to participate in the Witney Carnival by 9 June and advise officers and,
3. That, the Council facilitate a Climate awareness event,
4. That, the council promote local heritage open day events.

SC308 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Members received and considered the updated Community Engagement Strategy.

Members suggested some minor amendments and agreed to provide any final comments to the Community & Communications Officer ahead of the meeting of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 9 June.

However, Members were unanimous in agreement with its recommendation for adoption.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the updated strategy document be noted and,
2. That, any final amendments to the Community Engagement Strategy be advised to Officers ahead of agreement at the 9 June meeting of Policy, Governance & Finance and,
3. That, the strategy be recommended for approval.

SC309 **ANNUAL SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS**

The Committee received and considered the results of the annual residents' satisfaction survey.

Members were pleased to see that the highest percentage of responses had been from the under 17 age group, Officers advised they believed this to be due to push on social media to local schools and also youth council members.

Officers advised that each individual Committee would receive detailed information and comments for areas under their jurisdiction and that Members were welcome to provide any comments or suggestions for improvement.

The Committee were pleased how highly the Councils Civic Events had been scored and how this reflected on the organisation and effort of Officers.

They were however, concerned to see comments from younger residents stating they were not made to feel "welcome" and were "moved on" when they congregated. In response to this it was suggested that the Council consider again what support that The Station could provide either utilising the Corn Exchange or the upcoming Courtside building on The Leys perhaps once a week as an indoor meeting venue for younger people. It was unanimously agreed that this be added an objective for the Committee.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, an objective be set for the Committee to consider an indoor venue provision for young people.

SC310 **WITNEY FORUM NOTES**

The Committee received the notes of the Witney Forum Meeting held on 25 March 2025.

The Chair confirmed his intention to attend the next meeting of the Forum on 24 June 2025 in order to find out more about the groups that were working hard to provide assistance to the town's residents.

In reflection of the work of the Witney Forum he asked that a social media post be created to celebrate the work of volunteers across the town as it was currently National Volunteer Week, all Members were in agreement.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the Witney Forum minutes of 25 March 2025 be noted and,
2. That, Officers recognises the work of Volunteers in the community by way of a social media post.

---

The meeting closed at: 6.58 pm

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Chair

**POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 9 June 2025**

**At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney**

**Present:**

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	D Edwards-Hughes (In place of T Ashby)
	R Crouch	D Temple (In place of J Doughty)
	A Bailey	J Treloar (In place of G Doughty)
	S Simpson	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
	Angus Whitburn	Operations Manager
Others:	None.	

**F319 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs G Doughty, J Doughty, and T Ashby. They were substituted by Cllrs J Treloar, D Temple and D Edwards-Hughes respectively.

**F320 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers at this point of the meeting.

Cllr R Crouch later made a *personal, non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 14*

**F321 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr A Bailey and seconded by Cllr R Crouch that Cllr J Aitman be elected. There being no other nominations it was:

**Resolved:**

That, Councillor Joy Aitman be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

**F322 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 31 March 2025 and the Special Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 14 April 2025 were received.

F195 Property, Legal & Insurance Matters – The Chair advised the Pavilion task and finish group should be a Working Party due to the ongoing nature of its work. All were in agreement.

In response to a Member, the Town Clerk advised Cllr J Aitman had been added to the Pavilion Working Party at the Annual Council meeting and that Cllr D Newcombe had retained membership.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 31 March 2025 and the Special Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 14 April 2025 be approved as correct records of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

**F323 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

**F324 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received the report from the Deputy Town Clerk, which included proposed amendments to the current terms.

A verbal update was also provided, recommending that the terms and committee objectives be reviewed further to ensure they remained aligned.

**Resolved:**

That, agreement of the Committee terms of reference be deferred to the Special meeting of the Committee scheduled for 23 June 2025.

**F325 COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk/CEO.

Like the terms of reference, a verbal update was also provided, recommending that the terms and committee objectives be reviewed further to ensure they remained aligned with policy, properties and finances.

**Resolved:**

That, agreement of the Committee objectives and works programme for the municipal year be deferred to the Special meeting of the Committee scheduled for 23 June 2025.

F326 **BRIDGE STREET DESILTING**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Operations Manager.

Members were informed that this item had been agreed by the Council in 2024 as part of a broader report on riparian watercourse works for which it held responsibility in Witney. Although the area in question fell outside the Council's formal remit, it was agreed that the Council should set a positive example in riparian management by carrying out desilting work near the bridge, in the interest of the wider community.

Persistent high-water levels throughout 2024 had delayed the project, and the method of desilting now proposed differed from the original plan. Further information was still required, but current thinking suggested the revised approach would involve a road closure and incur higher costs than initially anticipated.

The Committee welcomed the renewed momentum behind the project and remained fully supportive of the scheme. It was agreed that all opportunities to secure funding for both the project itself and the potential road closure should be thoroughly explored by officers.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, further information is sought on costs and presented to the next meeting of the Committee and;
3. That, the budget be increased to a maximum of £15,000 if required but;
4. That, funding opportunities be sought for the project and possible road closure from other sources wherever possible.

F327 **MEMORIAL BENCH POLICY**

The Committee received the current memorial bench policy and agreed the process had expediated requests and therefore should be re-adopted and reviewed every two years.

**Recommended:**

That, the Memorial Bench Policy be re-adopted by the town council and reviewed every two years.

*The Operations Manager left the meeting at 6.24pm*

F328 **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS ADOPTION**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (R.F.O) along with the proposed new Financial Regulations approved on 31 March 2025.

The RFO confirmed the regulations complied with audit legislation and the updated sector Practitioner's Guide. Based on the NALC model, they had been adapted to reflect the Council's diverse services. Minor changes since March were noted, and Members were invited to adopt the final version.

The Chair thanked officers for their work. In response to a query, officers explained that risk management was addressed separately to ensure effective controls.



Key amendments proposed were updates to sections 7.1 (electronic payment authorisation) and 7.2 (insertion of “on request”). Regarding section 11, the Town Clerk/CEO clarified that while Councillors did not currently claim allowances, the clause should remain for flexibility. It was agreed the document would be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changed.

**Recommended:**

That, the updated Financial Regulations, subject to the above amendments, be adopted by the town council and reviewed annually or when legislation dictated.

**F329 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (R.F.O) with the accompanying payment schedules, bank statements and reconciliations.

In response to a Member’s query it was confirmed that an issue with direct debits was in hand and that Members would notice an increase in electronic payments moving forward due to the time and cost of processing cheque transactions.

In addition, the RFO tabled an addendum to the report at the meeting concerning the banking mandate for the Council’s CCLA investments. A correspondent for the investments was required along with Councillor signatories for payments.

**Recommended:**

1. That, Sharon Groth (Town Clerk/CEO) and the Members of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee, Cllrs Ruth Smith, Joy Aitman, Rachel Crouch, Andy Bailey, Jane Doughty, Thomas Ashby, Geoff Doughty, and Sandra Simpson, be appointed as signatories for the Council’s Public Sector Deposit Fund and the Local Authorities Property Fund and,
2. That, Nigel Warner, RFO, act as correspondent for the Local Authorities Property Fund and main contact for the Public Sector Deposit Fund and,
3. That, the report, bank statements and reconciliations be noted, and the following schedule of payments be approved:

Payment reference/ Cheque Numbers	In the sum of:	Account
Cheque 101277, DDs, ELPs 14 to 29 (electronic payments) and Standing Orders February 2025	£204,277.60	General CB 1
Cheques 35116-35119; DDs, BACs and Standing Orders February 2025	£16,883.13	Imprest CB 2
DDs, ELPs 30 to 41 and Standing Orders March 2025	£153,723.16	General CB 1
Cheques 35120-35158, cancelled cheques 34935 & 35115, DDs and Standing Orders March 2025	£28,302.47	Imprest CB 2

*The Responsible Financial Office left the meeting at 6.49pm*

*Cllr J Treloar left the meeting briefly at 6.52pm during the following item.*

F330 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Committee received a Community Engagement Strategy, recommended for approval by the Stronger Communities Committee on 2 June.

Members thanked the Communications & Community Engagement Officer for producing the document, which outlined the Council's approach to community engagement, how it was currently being achieved, and how its success would be measured moving forward.

**Recommended:**

That, the Community Engagement Policy be adopted by the town council and reviewed every two years.

*Cllr D Edwards-Hughes left the meeting briefly at 6.59pm during the following item.*

F331 **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

The Committee received a draft Volunteer Policy from the Council's Operations team and heard the Council currently had approximately eight interested parties.

The policy would apply to all volunteers, not just those supporting the Lake & Country Park. It outlined roles, responsibilities, and health and safety provisions. It did not cover volunteers involved in activities outside the Council's remit or individuals under the age of 16. A tailored induction would be provided, and reimbursement would be limited to minimal refreshments.

**Recommended:**

That, the Volunteer Policy be adopted by the town council and reviewed every two years or when any relevant legislation was changed.

F332 **FINANCIAL MATTERS REFERRED FROM SPENDING COMMITTEES**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk. Members noted the financial implications from decisions taken by the Council's standing Committees during the last meetings cycle.

PR273 – Members commended the Committee for resolving to engage professional services to deal with the issue of tax for the West Witney renovations.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, recommendations of the spending Committees as detailed be approved.

*Cllr R Crouch declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in the following item.*

**F333 GRANTS & SUBSIDISED LETTINGS**

The Committee considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report on local grant activity.

Members welcomed the new round of applications and approved subsidised use of the Corn Exchange for Witney in Pink, OCVA, and a centenarian birthday party. They also approved free use and a £500 budget to support hosting the Le Touquet Youth Council in July.

The discretionary grant application from Apollos Clothing was deferred to the next meeting pending clarification.

Members also noted grant monitoring updates on the £50 for 50 grants scheme, West Oxfordshire Community Transport, and thanked the Witney Town Hall Charity for its contribution toward Leys play equipment.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, a grant request from Apollos Clothing be deferred to the meeting of 23 June to allow further information to be submitted and;
3. That, Witney in Pink be awarded a subsidised let of the Corn Exchange for the sum of £287 and;
4. That, subsidised letting of the Corn Exchange for the Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action Group (OCVA) to host a public awareness event for the sum of £140 be approved and;
5. That, the use of the Main Hall at the Corn Exchange for a centenarian birthday party be approved and;
6. That, subsidised hire for the sum of £70 and a budget of £500 be approved an event to welcome the Le Touquet Youth Council to Witney in July and;
7. That, a grant of £1,236.24 from Witney Town Hall Charity for replacement play equipment at The Leys be welcomed and;
8. That, the usage figures from West Oxfordshire Community Transport for the previous six months be welcomed and;
9. That, the update on grant monitoring for the Council's £50 for 50 scheme be noted.

**F334 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved:**

That in accordance with section (1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

**F335 PROPERTY, LEGAL & INSURANCE MATTERS**

The Town Clerk/CEO advised that instead of providing a verbal update at the meeting she would provide a report for the newly scheduled Special Committee meeting on 23 June.

**Resolved:**

That, a report of these matters be deferred to the Special meeting of the Committee scheduled for 23 June 2025.

F336 **WITNEY SWIFTS LICENCE AGREEMENT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Estates & Operations.

Members welcomed the report which included a draft copy of the final licence agreement between the Council and Witney Swifts Cricket Club for use of the cricket pitch at West Witney Sports Ground.

Members were advised the agreement offered security of tenure to the Club and covered any concerns of the Council so was therefore agreeable to both parties.

The Committee thanked officers and representatives for their positivity in negotiations and agreed to approve the licence.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, the licence agreement between Witney Town Council and Witney Swifts Cricket Club for use of the cricket pitch at West Witney Sports Ground be approved and signed.

*The Responsible Financial Officer rejoined the meeting at 7.20pm during the following item.*

F337 **WEST WITNEY CONSULTATION & PROJECT UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Project Officer concerning funding for proposed West Witney Sports Ground projects.

Members were pleased with the positive public response to the consultation on the projects and the Council's decision to take out a loan to achieve their delivery. The comprehensive details provided in communications, including historical context and rationale, reflected the professionalism of the officers involved.

The Committee was unanimous in recommending to the Council that public works loan should be applied for to complete these projects.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, based on the approval ratings noted in the report, the Council proceeds to apply for a public works loan, not exceeding £1,250,516, to fund both parts of the West Witney Project.

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The meeting closed at: 7.25 pm

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Chair

## FULL COUNCIL



---

**Agenda Item:** Standing Orders Review

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 23 June 2025

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

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The purpose of this report is to present revised Standing Orders to the Council for formal adoption.

### Background

Standing Orders are the written rules of the Council and are used to confirm its internal, organisational, administrative procedures and procedural matters for meetings. The Standing orders contain limited financial information as procedures to regulate the Council's financial affairs and accounting procedures are contained in its financial regulations.

### Current Situation

The proposed, revised Standing Orders are attached as **Appendix A**. Those in bold contain statutory requirements while others are included to help the Council operate effectively to the Council's needs. The former standing orders can be found here [WTC Standing Orders 2023](#) for comparison.

The revised document was agreed by members at the Annual Council Meeting on 7 May 2025 (minute no: 256 refers). As best practice, the Standing Orders have stood adjourned until this meeting. If formally adopted, these Standing Orders will become the written rules of the council and state how it operates with immediate effect.

### Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no direct impact from the contents of this report
- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact from the contents of this report
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact from the contents of this report
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct impact from the contents of this report

### 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 Council must have relevant and effective Standing Orders in order to fulfil its obligations under various legislation and for governance purposes.

### **Social Value**

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

### **Financial implications**

➤ There are no implications from the contents of this report.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and

1. Consider adopting the revised Standing Orders (as attached) for Witney Town Council.



**WITNEY**  
TOWN COUNCIL

## **Standing Orders**

Adopted:

Review Date:

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## **1. Office Holders of the Council**

- a) **The Chair, known as the Town Mayor, who shall chair meetings of the Council** and be an ex-officio voting member of every committee and carry out civic duties as required.
- b) **The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office, and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- c) The Vice-Chair, known as the Deputy Town Mayor, who shall deputise for the Mayor in all duties in the Mayor's absence.
- d) **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council**
- e) **The Vice-Chair of the Council, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- f) The Leader of the Council, who shall be an ex-officio voting member of every committee.
- g) The Deputy-Leader, who shall deputise for the Leader in all duties in the Leader's absence.

## **2. Election of Mayor Elect/Designate**

- a) At the council meeting prior to the annual meeting of the council, the Mayor designate shall be appointed for the forthcoming year.

## **3. Proper Officer**

- a) The Proper Officer shall be either the (i) Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer or (ii) other staff member(s) appointed by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b) The Proper Officer shall:
  - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, a committee, or a sub-committee,**
    - **serve on Councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place, and the agenda (provided the Councillor has consented to service by email), and**
    - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, a public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by Councillors is signed by them).**

Clarification on notice periods is as follows:

**The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**

**The minimum three clear days' notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**

- ii. subject to SO 18, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a Councillor has given written notice at least 7 days before the meeting confirming withdrawal of it.
- iii. convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from Councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every Councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under Freedom of Information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation in accordance with the council's policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate with the Council's Data Protection Officer;
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority.
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chair, Vice-Chair and/or the Planning committee to facilitate a response if the nature or deadline of the consultation requires consideration before its next ordinary meeting. In such case, the details shall be raised as an agenda item at the next ordinary meeting to formalise the response.

- xvi. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme;  
and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the council which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

#### 4. Delegation of Urgent and Routine Matters

- a) There shall be delegated to the Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer the authority to act  
in respect of any function of the council on a matter, which in their opinion does not admit of delay or is routine. This delegated authority shall only be exercised in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair of the committee or sub-committee within whose terms of reference the particular function lies.
- b) Each exercise of delegated authority under this standing order shall be reported for information to the next meeting of the committee or sub-committee within whose terms of reference the particular function lies and to Council.
- c) The Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer shall notify all members of any action taken under this standing order.
- d) The delegations in this standing order are in addition to and without prejudice to the  
powers of the council or its committees to arrange for the discharge of any of its functions by a sub-committee or an officer.

#### 5. Meetings

- Full Council meetings      ●
- Committee meetings      ●
- Sub-committee meetings      ●

- a) **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost. ●**
  - i. Meetings of the Full Council shall be held at the Corn Exchange at 7pm on a Monday unless the Council decides otherwise.
  - ii. Committee meetings shall generally be held at the Corn Exchange at 6pm on a Monday unless the Council decides otherwise. The exception being the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning meeting which shall generally be held at 6pm on a Tuesday unless the Council decides otherwise.
- b) **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be**

**transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion. ●●**

- c) Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- d) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 5(e) shall not exceed twenty minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
- e) Subject to standing order 5(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than five minutes
- f) In accordance with standing order 5(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- g) A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and remain silent until directed by the Chair and may stand when speaking if they choose to do so;
- h) Whenever the Chair rises during a debate all other members shall be seated and silent;
- i) A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.
- j) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- k) **Subject to standing order 5(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present. ●●**
- l) **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission. ●●**
- m) **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present. ●●**
- n) **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting. ●**

- o) **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting. ●●●**
- p) **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote. ●●●**
- q) **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands ay council, committee or sub-committee. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda. ●
- r) The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
  - i. the time and place of the meeting;
  - ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent with apologies received;
  - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
  - iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
  - v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
  - vi. if there was a public participation session; and
  - vii. the resolutions made
- s) **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on their right to participate and vote on that matter. ●●●**
- t) **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three. ●**

*See standing order 5(u) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.*

- u) Six members shall constitute a quorum of the Council, but a motion to suspend or amend this standing order shall not be moved without written notice signed by

twice as many members as constitute the quorum.

- v) If, after ten minutes a Quorum is not present, **or if a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.



- w) A meeting shall not exceed a period of two hours unless it has been specifically agreed by that meeting.

## **6. Rules of Debate at Meetings**

- a) Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.
- b) A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c) A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d) If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e) An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f) If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g) An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the Chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the Chair.
- h) A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting, If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder at the meeting.
- i) If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chair of the meeting.
- j) Subject to Standing Order 6(i), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chair of the meeting.
- k) One or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted on separately.

- l) A Councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m) The mover of an amendment has no right to reply at the end of the debate on it.
- n) Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have the right to reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o) Unless permitted by the Chair of the meeting, a Councillor may speak once in the debate on the motion, except:
  - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another Councillor;
  - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
  - iii. to make a point of order;
  - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
  - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p) During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the Councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- q) A point of order shall be decided by the Chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.
- r) When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
  - i. to amend the motion;
  - ii. to proceed to the next business;
  - iii. to adjourn the debate;
  - iv. to put the motion to a debate;
  - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
  - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
  - vii. to exclude the press and public;
  - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.



- s) Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the Chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right to reply.
- t) Excluding motions moved under standing order 6(s), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the Chair of the meeting.

## **7. Disorderly Conduct at Meetings**

- a) No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the Chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b) If person(s) disregard(s) the request of the Chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the Chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c) If a resolution made under paragraph (b) above is ignored, the Chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

## **8. Committees and Sub-committees**

- a) **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by that committee.**
- b) **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c) The Mayor and Leader of the Council shall be an ex-officio member with voting rights on all committees.
- d) **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- e) The council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
  - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
  - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
  - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in the respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
  - iv. shall, subject to Standing Order 8(b) and (d), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;

- v. may, subject to Standing Order 8(b) and (d), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a Committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer (or appointed officer) 7 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
- vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the Chair of the standing committee;
- vii. every committee shall at its first meeting elect a Vice-Chair, who shall hold office until the next annual meeting of the council
- viii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own Chair at the first meeting of the committee;
- ix. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of the committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
- x. the Chair of the committee shall be a member of every sub- committee appointed by it unless wishing not to serve and such is recorded in the minutes of the committee appointing the sub- committee;
- xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of the committee;
- xii. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, are required for the meeting of a sub-committee;
- xiii. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of the sub-committee that they are permitted to attend;
- xiv. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee;
- XV. may appoint sub-committees for purposes to be specified by the committee but such sub-committee shall submit all recommendations to the committee unless power to act has been granted by the council for a specified purpose;
- xvi. the standing orders on rules of debate (except those parts relating to standing and to speaking more than once), voting and the standing order on interests of members and the code of conduct shall apply to committee and sub-committee meetings in so far as they are appropriate.
- xvii. In the event that an in-person meeting cannot be held, or if the business of the meeting is subject to a time limit set by statute and delegation is given to a committee under its terms of reference, it may be held virtually as an Advisory Committee with the same rules of debate as other committees. Any recommendations being affirmed at the full meeting of that committee, Full Council or under delegations to the Town Clerk/CEO.

## **9. Ordinary Council Meetings**

- a) **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**
- b) **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
- c) **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d) **In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council directs.**
- e) **The first business shall be to elect a Chair (Town Mayor, see standing order 4) the Vice-Chair (Deputy Town Mayor) and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.**
- f) **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- g) **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- h) **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i) Following the elections and appointments at paragraph (e) above, the business at the annual meeting shall include:
  - i. **in an election year, delivery by the Town Mayor of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
  - ii. to receive apologies for absence;
  - iii. to receive any declarations of interests;
  - iv. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.
  - v. confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;

- vi. Receipt of the minutes of the committee cycle and consideration of its recommendations (if appropriate);
- vii. appointment of members to committees, working parties, advisory committees, and outside organisations;
- viii. review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff, and other local authorities;
- ix. review of the terms of reference for committees;
- x. appointment of any new committees;
- xi. to review and adopt appropriate standing orders, financial regulations and other Council policies;
- xii. review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- xiii. review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses
- xiv. in an election year, to review the Council's eligibility to exercise the general power of competence.

## 10. Order of Business at Ordinary Meetings

- a) After the first business has been completed at meetings other than the annual meeting, the order of business, unless the Council decides otherwise on the ground of urgency, shall be as follows:
  - i. to receive apologies;
  - ii. to receive any declarations of interests;
  - iii. **to approve and adopt the minutes as a correct record in accordance with standing order 26;**
  - iv. **to deal with business expressly required by the statute to be done before any other business;**
  - v. to consider any requests for public participation in accordance with standing order 5(d);
  - vi. to receive and agree the Committee minutes including considering recommendations;
    - 1. The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the Council be approved as a correct record and seek a seconder;
    - 2. The Chair shall go through the minutes to allow members to raise any points of accuracy;

3. No motion or discussion shall take place upon the minutes except upon their accuracy;
  4. The Chair shall sign the minutes;
  5. The Chair shall then page through the minutes for questions to the Leader of the Council as to the progress of any item;
  6. Subject to the publication of draft minutes and resolution which confirms their accuracy, the draft minutes, or recordings of the meetings for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed at the earliest opportunity.
- vii. to receive the Mayor's report;
  - viii. to dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting;
  - ix. to agree the schedules of financial payments recommended by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee;
  - x. to receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may wish to bring before the Council and to consider the recommendation of the Leader on how such communications should be dealt with;
  - xi. to consider motions in the order in which they have been notified;
  - xii. to consider any other matters specified in the summons, including reports from officers;
  - xiii. to receive correspondence for information;
  - xiv. questions to the Leader of the Council;
  - xv. to authorise the sealing of documents;
  - xvi. to consider confidential and exempt matters.

## **11. Extraordinary Meetings of the Council, Committees & Sub-committees**

- a) **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b) **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two Councillors, any two Councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place, and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two Councillors.**
- c) The Chair of a Committee or Sub-Committee, in consultation with the Proper Officer, may convene an extraordinary meeting at any time.

## **12. Special Committee Meetings**

- a) The Chair of a committee or a sub-committee may convene a special meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- b) If the Chair of a committee or a sub-committee does not or refuses to call a special meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two members of the committee or the sub-committee, any two members of the committee and the sub-committee may convene a special meeting of that committee and a sub-committee.

## **13. Working Parties and Task & Finish Groups**

- a) The Council may from time to time appoint working parties or groups to deal with a specific function or project.
- b) Membership and terms of reference of such working parties or groups, including possible external membership, the number required for a quorum and voting rights, shall be determined at their formation.
- c) The provisions relating to committees and sub-committees in standing orders will apply, with the exception of standing order 8(c) which provides for the Mayor and Leader being ex-officio voting members of every committee.

## **14. Presence of non-members of Committees and Sub-committees at Meetings**

- a) A Member who has proposed a motion which has been referred to any committee of which they are not a member, may explain their motion to the committee but shall not vote.
- b) Any Member shall, unless the council otherwise orders, be entitled to be present as a spectator at the meetings of any committee or sub-committee of which they are not a Member and may speak if so invited but shall not vote.

## **15. Previous Resolutions**

- a) A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least four members of the council to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 18, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b) When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 15(b) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

## **16. Representation on Outside Bodies – Termination of Membership**

- a) The appointment of Members of the Council to outside bodies in their capacity as a Member of the Town Council shall, subject to the rules of that body, terminate if the Member appointed ceases to be a Member of the Council.

## **17. Voting on Appointments**

- a) Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the Chair of the meeting.

## **18. Motions for a Meeting that Require Written Notice to be Given to the Proper Officer**

- a) A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event, shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b) No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c) The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 18(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d) If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 18(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting.
- e) If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f) The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

- g) Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order in which they are received and entered in a book which shall be open for inspection by any member of the Council.
- h) Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.
- i) The Clerk/Chief Executive Officer shall insert in the summons for every meeting all notices of motion properly given in the order in which they have been received unless the member giving a notice of motion has stated in writing that he/she intends to move at some later meeting or that he/she withdraws it.
- j) If a motion specified in the summons is not moved at the meeting, it shall, unless postponed by the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.
- k) If the subject matter of a motion comes within the responsibility of a Committee of the Council, it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to such Committee or to such other Committee as the Council may determine for report; provided that the Chair, if they considers it to be a matter of urgency, may allow it to be dealt with at the meeting at which it was moved.

#### **19. Motions at a Meeting that do not require written notice**

- a) The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the proper officer:
  - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
  - ii. to move to a vote;
  - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
  - iv. to refer a motion or matter to a particular committee or sub-committee;
  - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
  - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
  - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
  - viii. to require a written report;
  - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
  - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
  - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
  - xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;



- xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct in accordance with standing order 7(a);
- xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
- xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii. to close a meeting.

## **20. Motions on Expenditure**

- a) If any motion proposed, would, in the opinion of the Chair, if carried substantially increase the expenditure upon any service which is under the management of, or reduce the revenue at the disposal of any committee, or would involve capital expenditure, it shall, when proposed and seconded stand adjourned without discussion until such time as any committee affected by it and the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee has reported on the matter.

## **21. Inspection of Documents**

- a) A Member may for the purposes of their duty as such (but not otherwise), inspect any document relevant to such purpose in possession of the Council or a Committee, and if copies are available shall, on request, be supplied for the like purpose with a copy

## **22. Questions**

- a) A Member of the Council may ask the Leader of the Council any question concerning the business of the Council. Any such questions shall be put when the item "Questions to the Leader of the Council" is reached.
- b) A Member of the Council, with or without notice, may ask the Chair of a Committee any question upon the proceedings of the Committee then before the Council if the question is put before the Council's consideration of those proceedings is finished.
- c) Every question shall be put and answered without debate.
- d) A person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer.
- e) Where the desired information to a question is contained in any of the Council's publications, it shall be deemed a sufficient reply if the publication containing the reply is indicated.

- f) Where the reply to any question cannot be conveniently given orally it shall be deemed a sufficient reply if the answer is circulated to the members of the Council with the minutes of the Meeting at which the question has been asked.

### **23. Handling Staff Matters**

- a) A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Council is subject to standing order (management of information)
- b) All persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- c) If at a meeting there arises any question relating to the appointment, conduct, promotion, dismissal, salary or conditions of service, of any person employed by the council, it shall not be considered until the council or committee (as the case may be) has decided whether or not the public and press shall be excluded

### **24. Management of Information**

- a) **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- b) **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c) **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d) **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

### **25. Public Participation**

- a) For all meetings of the Council and its standing committees, an item entitled "public participation" shall be included on the agenda for that meeting immediately after "minutes"

- b) Members of the public may speak for a maximum of five minutes each during the period of public participation. Matters raised shall relate to items on the agenda for that particular meeting.
- c) Following submission by a member of the public, any Member of the Council may, through the Chair, ask questions of the person(s) concerned for clarification purposes or on points of information.
- d) Any question from the member of the public shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- e) A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the Chair of the meeting.
- f) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking. If more than one person wants to speak on the same or a similar issue, they shall elect one person to speak on their behalf.
- g) The Chair may move the order of business be altered to take the matter on which the public has made representations immediately after the minutes of the meeting have been approved, or in such other place as seems appropriate.
- h) Total public participation lasts no longer for 25 minutes. Questions not answered within that period will receive a written reply.

## 26. Draft Minutes

Full Council meetings	●
Committee meetings	●
Sub-committee meetings	●

- a) If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b) There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 19.
- c) The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d) If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect

“The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the ( ) held on [date] in respect of ( ) were a correct record but this view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”

- e) **If the Council’s gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is**
  - **higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on**
  - **a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later**
  - than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
- f) Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 26(a) and standing order 26(c) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

## **27. Presentation of Committee Minutes**

- a) At each ordinary meeting of the council every standing committee shall present reports and recommendations in the form of draft minutes of any meeting held since the previous ordinary meeting of the council.
- b) The Committee Chair, or the member presenting the minutes, shall page through the minutes, and members may ask questions for answering.
- c) The Committee Chair, or member presenting the minutes, shall then propose that the minutes be adopted, and once seconded shall be discussed and dealt with by the council.
- d) Where an amendment is proposed prior to the adoption of the minutes by the council, the subject of any such amendment shall be discussed and disposed of before the adoption of the minutes are considered by the council.
- e) In moving the adoption of the minutes, the mover is deemed to have moved the minutes in their entirety and all paragraphs and recommendations contained therein shall be deemed to have been adopted unless any amendment thereto has been moved.
- f) Paragraphs which do not contain recommendations, or which relate to matters specifically and fully delegated to standing committees, may be discussed but no motion shall be considered other than a motion as to the future work of a committee in such matters.

## **28. Code of Conduct and Dispensations**

- a) All councillors or and non-councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

- b) All Councillors will observe the NALC Civility & Respect Pledge taken by the town council.
- c) Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they have the interest.
- d) Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or no-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- e) **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- f) A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- g) A dispensation request shall confirm;
  - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
  - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
  - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
  - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- h) Subject to paragraphs (e) and (g) above, dispensations requests shall be considered at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- i) **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with paragraph (f) above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:**
  - i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;**
  - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area, or**
  - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

## **29. Code of Conduct Complaints**

- a) Upon notification by West Oxfordshire District Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

## **30. Responsible Financial Officer**

- a) The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

## **31. Accounts and Accounting Statements**

- a) 'Proper practices' in standing orders refer to the most recent version of 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide.'
- b) All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c) The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each Councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
  - i. The Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
  - ii. The Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
  - iii. The balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d) As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
  - i. Each Councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
  - ii. To the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration or approval.
- e) The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March.
- f) A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all Councillors at least 7 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council , which is subject to

external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

### **32. Financial Controls and Procurement**

- a) The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
  - i. The keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls
  - ii. The assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
  - iii. The work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually.
  - iv. The inspection and copying by Councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - v. Whether contracts with an estimated value below £60,000 due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- a) Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- b) Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
  - i. A specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
  - ii. An invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
  - iii. Tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
  - iv. Tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for the submission of tenders has passed;
  - v. Tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a Committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

- c) Neither the Council, nor a Committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- d) **Where the value of the contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules.**

### **33. General Power of Competence**

- a) Before exercising the general power of competence, a meeting of the full council shall have passed a resolution to confirm it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible parish council.
- b) The Council's period of eligibility begins on the date that the resolution under standing order 9 was made and expires on the day of the annual meeting of the council that takes place in a year of ordinary elections.
- c) After the expiry of its preceding period of eligibility, the council continues to be an eligible council solely for the purpose of completing any activity undertaken in the exercise of the general power of competence which was not completed before the expiry of the council's preceding period of eligibility referred to in standing order 9.

### **34. Responsibilities to Provide Information**

- a) **In accordance with the freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b) **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

### **35. Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation**

- a) The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer;
- b) **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data;**
- c) **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d) **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**



- e) **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f) **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

### **36. Relations with the Press & Media**

- a) Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

### **37. Execution and Sealing of Documents**

- a) A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b) **Subject to standing order 3(b) , the council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer and Town Mayor.**

### **38. Signature of Documents**

- a) Where any document will be a necessary step in legal proceedings on behalf of the Council it shall be signed by the Town Clerk, unless any enactment otherwise requires or authorises, or the Council shall have given the necessary authority to some other person for the purpose of such attestation.

### **39. Canvassing of Recommendations by, and Relationship to Members**

- a) Canvassing of Members or of any committee, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the council shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment. The Proper Officer shall make known this sub-paragraph to every candidate.
- b) A Member of the Council shall not solicit for any person any appointment under the council or recommend any person for such appointment or for promotion, but, nevertheless, a Member may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the council with an application for appointment.
- c) If a candidate for any appointment under the council is to their knowledge related to any Member of, or the holder of any office under, the council, they and the person to whom they are related shall disclose the relationship in writing to the Proper Officer. Any breach of this standing order is to be reported to the council.

- d) This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

#### **40. Restrictions on Councillor Activities**

- a) Unless duly authorised no Councillor shall:
  - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
  - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

#### **41. Standing Orders Generally**

- a) All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements and are in bold type, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b) A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 4 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 18.
- c) A resolution permanently to add, vary or revoke a Standing Order shall when proposed and seconded stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council, and if so directed, upon a report of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.
- d) The scheduled review of Standing Orders shall be initiated by the Proper Officer and once proposed and seconded, will stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council and, if so directed, upon a report to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee (as the only exception to standing order 41(b)).
- e) The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- f) The decision of the Chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

## FULL COUNCIL



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**Agenda Item:** Committee Terms of Reference

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 23 June 2025

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

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The purpose of this report is for the Council to approve standing Committee terms of reference for the new municipal year.

### Background

At the Annual Council Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025, it was resolved that terms of reference for each Committee would be reviewed at each meeting in the current meeting cycle and referred to the Council for ratification at this meeting.

### Current Situation

The recommended terms for each Committee are listed below:

#### Parks & Recreation Committee

- a) To maintain all Recreation Grounds, Parks (including play equipment) and public open spaces and to initiate and oversee all matters of control properly associated with this recreation function;
- b) To maintain and oversee all sports activities upon any Recreation Ground or other recreational open space and buildings erected for such purposes thereon;
- c) To keep under review/updated the sports strategy within the Council's adopted Open Spaces Strategy to meet the changing needs of the community, sporting governing bodies recommendations and West Oxfordshire District Council's Playing Pitch Strategy in the Local Plan
- d) To deal with the development and investment in the Council owned play areas, ensuring they remain safe and are inclusive wherever possible;
- e) To facilitate entertainment, community, and third-party events by ensuring that parks, recreation grounds, and related facilities are suitable, safe, and properly maintained for such use;
- f) Within all its decision making ensure that the green environment and biodiversity of public open spaces is protected and enhanced in line with the Council's Climate Emergency aspirations.
- g) To oversee any development and investment of Council owned recreation ground sites and its supporting infrastructure, ensuring they remain safe and compliant.
- h) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of six Members plus the Town Mayor and the Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights;
- i) The quorum of the Committee shall be four Members.

### Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee

- a) To operate, maintain and control the Corn Exchange, Burwell Hall, Langdale Hall and Madley Park Hall in all matters relative to their use as public halls be it through direct management or via trusteeships;
- b) The operation of such other buildings as the Council may from time to time acquire if so instructed;
- c) To operate and maintain the Cemeteries, burial responsibilities and associated duties, consequential to Statutory or Council requirements, together with the War Memorials;
- d) To carry out the Council's obligations with regard to the Closed Churchyards of St Mary's and Holy Trinity;
- e) To oversee the management of Hailey Road, Lakeside, Newland and Windrush Place Allotments whilst leased to the Witney Allotment Association;
- f) To oversee the development and management of the Corn Exchange (including the 1863 café bar) as a community hub and arts centre in line with the Council's vision and long-term business plan for the venue;
- g) Within all its decision making ensure that the green environment and biodiversity of public open spaces is protected and enhanced in line with the Council's Climate Emergency aspirations;
- h) To oversee any development and investment in Council-owned public halls, and the supporting infrastructure, ensuring they meet the needs of the community, remain safe and compliant;
- i) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of 6 Members plus the Town Mayor and the Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights;
- j) The quorum of the Committee shall be 4 Members.

### Stronger Communities Committee

- a) To acknowledge and promote the value and contributions of voluntary groups, local organisations, and community interest companies that deliver social value to our community—supporting and facilitating services, whether through partnerships or ad hoc arrangements, in accordance with relevant policies and legislation;
- b) To oversee community engagement with all residents of Witney, relevant stake holders and businesses, including, but not limited to conducting an annual resident satisfaction survey to gauge feedback;
- c) To recognise the importance of inclusivity by ensuring all voices in the community are heard and represented, advocating for underrepresented groups in line with equality legislation;
- d) To engage proactively with young people, supporting and promoting youth services where possible, and to oversee the operations of the Witney Youth Council;
- e) To oversee and maintain the infrastructure owned by the Town Council, including street furniture in the town centre (e.g. seating, litter bins, and salt bins), bus shelters, CCTV, noticeboards, and Christmas light displays;
- f) To organise and deliver civic events, such as Remembrance, in line with the approved programme and within the budget set by the Council;
- g) To work in collaboration with other partnerships on town wide events such as the Christmas Lights switch-on and others that may arise from time to time;

- h) To co-ordinate national commemorations, special community events, and initiatives in accordance with the Council's agreed programme and budget;
- i) To oversee the Council's communications and publications, including the website, newsletter, and social media platforms;
- j) To administer the Children & Young People Grant funds, considering applications and/or funding on an annual basis and making recommendations to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee;
- k) To oversee the local Schools in Bloom competition and the Council's entry into the regional In Bloom Competition;
- l) Within all its decision making ensure that the green environment and biodiversity is protected and enhanced in line with the Council's Climate Emergency aspirations;
- m) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of 6 Members plus the Town Mayor and The Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights;
- n) The quorum of the Committee shall be 4 Members.

#### Climate & Biodiversity Committee

- a) To work to achieve energy efficiencies and net zero carbon emissions in the Council's operations and facilities by 2028, in line with the Council's Climate Emergency resolution made in June 2019;
- b) To manage the Council's Environmental Spaces, including Amenity Areas, Witney Lake and Country Park, Tiny Forest and Community Orchards (except recreation grounds);
- c) To oversee the management of the Council's tree stock across the town;
- d) To engage with Central Government, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, local Oxfordshire organisations, relevant stake holders and other organisations to initiate local action on climate change (towards achieving net zero carbon emissions) air & water pollution, and other environmental issues within the town;
- e) To encourage biodiversity and healthy recreation in the environmental spaces;
- f) To explore and promote the expansion of community energy to keep the benefits of our local energy generation in our local economy;
- g) To identify ways for event's organisers to reduce the carbon footprint of events held on council ground. Any financial or policy change implications should be recommended to the Council;
- h) To oversee the maintenance of the Council's infrastructure concerning planting displays (including hanging baskets);
- i) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of 6 Members plus the Town Mayor and the Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights;
- j) The quorum of the committee shall be 4 members.

## Planning & Development Committee

- a) To receive planning applications and to comment on them in the name of the Council within the time limit set by statute. The Committee may decide, where time for consultation allows, to make a recommendation to the Council on any application considered to have a major impact on the town;
- b) To consider any planning decisions, appeals, planning briefs and tree preservation orders, and recommend, if appropriate, any views that should be expressed by the Council, or any action that should be taken, in respect of these;
- c) To consider, and submit appropriate representations on behalf of the Council, in respect of applications for justices, gaming, public entertainment and pavement licences;
- d) To consider, and submit appropriate representations on behalf of the Council, in respect of street naming, highways and traffic regulation consultations unless deemed by the Proper Officer of significance to be referred to Full Council;
- e) To consider, and submit appropriate representations on behalf of the Council, in respect of consultations relevant to the sphere of planning and development including forward planning;
- f) To consider and submit appropriate representations on behalf of the Council concerning the potential impact of flooding in Witney, including requests for mitigation measures and comments on sustainable drainage solutions. Due to the serious nature of flooding events, any incidents will be referred to Full Council for further consideration, response and escalation with other agencies;
- g) To consider the impact on the green and water environments, ecosystems and biodiversity of all planning applications and comment in the name of the Council accordingly;
- h) To promote sustainable and active travel in the future planning of the town;
- i) To receive and review the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee and address any resulting actions relevant to the Town Council;
- j) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of 5 Members plus the Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights;
- k) The quorum of the committee shall be 4 members.

## Policy Governance & Finance Committee

This item was deferred until the special meeting of the Committee prior to the Full Council meeting. A verbal update will be provided.

### **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – The Stronger Communities Committee has proposed terms on inclusivity for all residents. The Policy, Governance and Finance Committee ensures the Council acts in compliance with legislation, this includes equality laws.

- b) Biodiversity – All Committee terms of reference have reference to biodiversity.
- c) Crime & Disorder – This item is considered by all Committees via this standing item in Reports.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - All Committee terms of reference have reference to the environment.

## **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.

## **Social Value**

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

The majority of Council services provide social value for different parts of the community. This item on Committee reports ensures consideration during discussion on projects.

## **Financial implications**

- There are no financial implications pertaining to this report. In meeting terms of reference each Committee has budgets for services under its remit.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Approve the Committee terms of reference for the 2025-26 municipal year as recommended by each Committee above.

## FULL COUNCIL



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**Agenda Item:** Scheme of Delegation

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 23 June 2025

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

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The purpose of this report is to approve a Scheme of Delegation for Witney Town Council.

### Background

The Council's 'scheme of delegation' dictates what decisions/resolutions can be made by the Council, Committees, officers and those who hold roles of responsibility; they help expediate the Council's work and actions and are closely tied to the terms of reference for each Committee.

The Town Council has the power to delegate functions under the Local Government Act 1972 s 101:

*a) the Town Council has the power to arrange for the discharge of its functions by a committee, sub-committee or officer of the authority.*

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations outline which decisions may be taken by officers upon satisfaction of certain conditions. Both these documents were reviewed, updated and agreed by the Council in the last year.

### Current Situation

The scheme was last updated during the last Council administration and the Committee structure has adapted since that time. An updated Scheme of Delegation is attached as **Appendix A** for consideration.

### Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no impact from this report
- b) Biodiversity – no impact from this report
- c) Crime & Disorder – no impact from this report
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no impact from this report



## **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 Scheme of Delegation ensures that decisions taken by Committees, Sub-Committees or Officers are in line with legislation and are therefore less likely to be successfully challenged.

## **Social Value**

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

## **Financial Implications**

➤ There are no financial implications.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider adopting the updated Scheme of Delegation for Witney Town Council.



**WITNEY**  
TOWN COUNCIL

## **Scheme of Delegation**

Adopted:

Review Date:

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# 1. Introduction

This Scheme of Delegation outlines the responsibilities and decision-making processes within Witney Town Council, ensuring efficient governance, accountability, and transparency through appropriate delegation of authority.

Under Section 101(a) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Town Council has the power to arrange for the discharge of its functions to a committee, sub-committee, or officer of the authority. This scheme reflects the Council's use of that power and defines the framework within which Council Officers and Committees operate.

Delegation of certain decisions is essential for the effective operation of the Town Council, which manages a range of services and assets. While Members collectively make policy decisions through full Council and its Committees, no individual Member or informal grouping of Members holds authority to act or instruct Officers or contractors. Officers are responsible for advising Members on policy matters and ensuring those policies are carried out in accordance with the law, Council policies, and approved budgets.

The Scheme sets out:

- The roles and responsibilities of Officers and Committees;
- The job titles of those holding delegated authority;
- Any consultation requirements before action is taken;
- The importance of operating within the Council's strategic goals and legal obligations.

Day-to-day management of Council operations rests with the Town Clerk/CEO, who may nominate another named Officer or professional to carry out delegated duties. Such delegations must be recorded in writing.

All delegated powers must be exercised in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, this Scheme, and any other relevant policies or conditions imposed by the Council. Any deviation from this Scheme must be reported to the Council at the earliest opportunity, with an explanation of the circumstances.

This Scheme will remain in force on an ongoing basis and will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains current and effective.

General Principles:

- a) The Town Council will operate within the legal framework set by relevant legislation and regulations

- b) Decision-making will be conducted in accordance with democratic principles, considering the best interests of the community.
- c) Delegated authority will be exercised responsibly, with due consideration for public scrutiny and accountability.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.1 Council**

The following matters are reserved to the Council for decision, notwithstanding that the appropriate committee(s) may make recommendations for the Council's consideration.

- (1) Approving the Town Council's budget and setting the Precept;
- (2) Agreeing the Town Council's Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement;
- (3) Authorising borrowing;
- (4) Declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence;
- (5) Appointing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in May each year;
- (6) Execution and sealing of documents;
- (7) Establishing committees and determining their terms of reference and membership;
- (8) Making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Committee Terms of Reference or this Scheme of Delegation;
- (9) Making, amending or revoking, re-enacting or adopting by-laws;
- (10) Making of orders under any statutory powers;
- (11) Matters of principle or policy;
- (12) Nomination and appointment of representatives of the Council to any other authority, organisation or body (excepting approved conferences or meetings);
- (13) Any proposed new undertakings;
- (14) Prosecution or defence in a court of law;
- (15) Confirming the appointment of a new Town Clerk, further to a recommendation from the appointed recruitment panel when a vacancy arises;
- (16) Dismissal of the Town Clerk on the recommendation of the Discipline & Grievance Committee;
- (17) Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Council at any inquiry on matters affecting the Town, excluding those matters specific to a committee.
- (18) All other matters which must, by law, be determined by resolution of Full Council.

### **2.2 Proper Officer**

The Town Clerk is employed by the Council (under section 112 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972) and is required to be independent, objective and professional at all times. The Town Clerk serves the Council as a Corporate Body and is answerable to that body, rather than to any individual councillor or group of councillors. Standing Order 3 applies.

The Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer shall be the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is responsible for all statutory duties imposed, specifically:

- (1) To receive declarations of acceptance of office.
- (2) To receive and record notices disclosing personal and prejudicial interests.
- (3) To receive and retain plans and documents.
- (4) To sign notices or other documents on behalf of the Council.
- (5) To receive copies of by-laws made by the unitary authority.
- (6) To certify copies of by-laws made by the Council.
- (7) To sign summonses to attend meetings of the Council.

In addition, the Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

- (1) The day-to-day administration of services, together with routine inspection and control of assets and procedures.
- (2) Day to day supervision and control of all staff employed by the Council, including recruitment.
- (3) Authorisation of routine expenditure within the agreed budget.
- (4) Emergency expenditure up to £5,000 outside the agreed budget.

Delegated actions of the Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and with directions given by the Council from time to time.

The Town Clerk is the Council's Proper Officer and in their absence their duties will be fulfilled by the Deputy Town Clerk.

### **2.3 Responsible Financial Officer**

The Responsible Financial Officer to the Council, appointed in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, shall be responsible for the Town Council's accounting procedures in compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time, and is responsible for all statutory duties imposed.

### **2.4 Mayor/Chair of the Council**

No matter may be delegated to the Mayor except for the following:

- a) Convening an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council.
- b) Receiving the resignation of any member.
- c) When attending a Full Council meeting, the powers granted to a chair of a meeting.
- d) Attending a civic function as a representative of the Council, it being understood that the contents of any speeches must not purport to being the view of the Council unless previously agreed.

## **2.5 Chair of a meeting**

When a councillor acts in the role of the chair of a meeting, they shall have the power to:

- a) Convene an extraordinary meeting of the relevant Council or committee.
- b) Direct the order of speaking.
- c) Direct any response to a question posed during public participation.
- d) Suspend or close a meeting, where a resolution has been made to that effect, or where the meeting is subject to disorderly conduct, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders
- e) In the case of an equality of votes on any matter, exercise a casting vote.
- f) Determine the rules of debate, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
- g) Determine a point of order.
- h) Put a motion to the vote.
- i) Sign the minutes of a previous meeting, once confirmed by a resolution as an accurate record.
- j) Move that a person be silenced or excluded from the meeting for disorderly conduct.

## **2.6 Councillors**

No matter may be delegated to an individual councillor, except that:

- a) Two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council, should the Mayor refuse to do so.
- b) Matters may be delegated to an officer to determine *in consultation* with one or more councillors, it being understood that the officer shall not overrule any reasonable request of that member(s), but that the officer's decision shall be final.

No councillor may issue an instruction to an officer but may highlight any issue that they believe requires the attention of the Council.

Any issue regarding staff performance may only be raised with the Town Clerk or through the appropriate committee.

### 3. Committees

Matters delegated to the council's standing committees, sub-committees and task & finish groups are specified under each Terms of Reference; but for avoidance of doubt are summarised below:

#### 3.1 The **Policy, Governance & Finance Committee**, being the Council's Executive Committee, shall consider and determine the following matters:

- Matters of Council administration and policy.
- Consideration of the Council's budget and recommendation of consolidated finance requirements.
- Budgetary control.
- Matters relating to Council owned property and property for which the Council is a tenant.
- Matters properly referred from other Committees within the requirements of Standing Orders.
- Annual, Discretionary, Subsidised Letting and any other Financial Grants.
- Staff Establishment – to make recommendations and to receive reports by the Standing Personnel Sub-Committee.
- To approve the Council's Strategic Plan and any other Council strategies and arrangements for their publication.
- To consider Service Reviews for all services and to report recommendations to Council at the conclusion of the matters reviewed.
- To deal with any other relevant issue arising from the implementation of any new legislation.
- To review and manage the Council's contracts

#### 3.2 The **Parks & Recreation Committee** shall consider and determine the following matters – operating within budget and Council Policy:

- The operation of all recreation grounds, parks and public open spaces and to initiate and oversee all matters of control properly associated with this recreation function.
- To oversee all sports activities upon any recreation ground or other recreational open space and building erected for such purposes thereon.

#### 3.3 The **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee** shall consider and determine the following matters – operating within budget and Council Policy:

- The operation of the Council's public halls – currently the Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall (and any others that are leased to third parties or which may come into the Council's custodianship in the future).



- The operation of the cemeteries, burial responsibilities and associated duties, consequential to Statutory or Council requirements, together with the War Memorials.
- To carry out the Council's obligations with regard to the Closed Churchyards of St Mary's and Holy Trinity.
- Overseeing the management of the Council's allotments provision – currently run by the Witney Allotment Association.

3.4 The **Stronger Communities Committee** shall consider and determine the following

matters – operating within budget and Council Policy:

- To consider all matters not within the specific terms of reference of any other Committee such as; town centre street furniture (seats, litter bins), bus shelters/public transport, CCTV, noticeboards and Christmas Lights displays.
- To organise special events such as Freedom Parades, Remembrance Sunday and other Civic events within the programme and the budget agreed by the Council.
- To work in collaboration with other partnerships on town wide events such as Witney Music Festival, the Christmas Lights Switch-on and others that may arise from time to time.
- To help facilitate entertainment and community events in such parks, recreation grounds or elsewhere in the Council's management at its discretion.
- To oversee the Council's communication and publications – such as the website, social media and newsletters.
- To oversee the work of the Youth Council.
- To recognise the value and benefit of voluntary groups and endeavours within our community, including provision of youth services, supporting and helping to facilitate where possible.

3.5 The **Planning & Development Committee** shall consider and determine the following matters – in accordance with Council Policy, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and any other legislation which is appropriate:

- To comment on planning applications received from the local planning authority within statutory timescales.
- Licensing matters.

- To comment on behalf of the Council on Local Plans, Structure Plans, Mineral Plans, Waste Plans, Regional Plans and any other Plans or Studies as considered appropriate.
- To deal with matters relating to street and footway lighting; traffic control and traffic notices, including on and off-street parking; street naming and road closures; footpaths and subways.
- Any other matter which may be delegated to it by the Council from time to time
- To receive the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee.

3.6 The **Climate & Biodiversity Committee** shall consider and determine the following

matters – operating within budget and Council Policy:

- To oversee the management of the Lake & Country Park, working with other organisations to ensure proper use – such as a grazier, the angling clubs and others.
- To deal with all other matters relating to the environment and biodiversity, including horticulture (trees, bulbs, wildflowers, shrubs, floral displays etc).
- To oversee the reduction in the Council's Carbon footprint in response to the Climate Emergency declared in 2019 to help achieve neutrality by 2028.
- To lobby other Authorities and Organisations to improve the quality of life by residents in respect of water and air quality.

A Committee may refer matters on which it has delegated authority to the Council for a final decision if it so wishes.

## 4. **Sub Committees**

4.1 The **Personnel Sub-Committee** shall be delegated to make decisions on behalf of the Council in the following matters: relating to the appointment, conduct, promotion, dismissal, salary and conditions of service of all persons employed by the Council.

Policy on the following matters is reserved to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee for decision but the sub-committee may also make policy recommendations relating to:

- Salaries;
- Conditions of service;
- Staff levels;
- Consideration of staffing reviews.

4.2 The **Discipline & Grievance Panel** is delegated to make decisions on the behalf of the Council in the following matters:

- Hearings for grievance, disciplinary and capability matters for the Town Clerk/C.E.O and senior managers in accordance with the Council's grievance and disciplinary procedure.
- Dealing with any grievance, disciplinary and capability matters for the Town Clerk/C.E.O and senior managers to a final conclusion, only reporting to Council when the time for any appeal has passed.

4.3 An **Appeals Panel** will be formed as and when required ensuring impartiality and fairness for the employee at all times, to deal with and conclude matters relating to:

- Appeals against decisions made by or on behalf of the Town Clerk/C.E.O in grievance, disciplinary and capability matters
- Dealing with appeals to a final conclusion, only reporting to Council the actions it has taken at the end of the process

4.4 Other standing sub-committees may be formed by resolution of the Council at any time under Standing Order 30 and delegated powers may be decided upon at the time the sub-committee is formed by means of a minute detailing the terms of reference.

## 5. **Working Groups/Parties**

5.1 Working groups/parties may be formed by resolution of the Council or a committee at any time. The work of such a working group/party will be decided upon at the time it is formed by means of a minute detailing the terms of reference. Each working group/party will report back with recommendations to the Council or the committee that formed it.

## 6. **Urgent Matters**

In line with SO 4:

- (1) In the event of any matter arising which requires an urgent decision, the Town Clerk/C.E.O shall consult the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee(or Vice Chair if they are one in the same), and with the concurrence of those member(s) shall have delegated power to act on behalf of the Council in respect of the particular matter then under consideration.

- (2) Before exercising the delegated powers granted by paragraph 7 (1) above, the Town Clerk/C.E.O and those members consulted shall consider whether the matter is of sufficient interest to justify the summoning of a special meeting of the appropriate committee and where a meeting is so summoned the committee concerned shall have delegated power to act on behalf of the Council in respect of the particular matter then under consideration.
- (3) Before exercising the delegated powers granted by paragraph 7 (1) above, the committee concerned shall consider whether the matter is of sufficient importance to justify recommending to the Mayor that a special meeting of the Council should be called in accordance with Standing Order 7.
- (4) Any action is taken under this Standing Order must recorded in writing and made available for inspection by any member of the Council. Full details of the circumstances justifying the urgency and of the action taken shall be submitted in writing to the next available meetings of the Committee concerned and of the Council.

## **7. Delegation - Limitations**

Committees and sub-committees shall, at all times, act in accordance with the Council's standing orders, financial regulations and this scheme of delegation and, where applicable, any other rules, regulations, schemes, statutes, by-laws or orders made and with any directions given by the Council from time to time.

## FULL COUNCIL



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Agenda Item: Public Works Loan Borrowing - West Witney Sports Ground

Meeting Date: Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025

Contact Officer: Project Officer and the Responsible Finance Officer

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### Background

The West Witney Project represents the largest investment in this complex since it was acquired in 1979. The Project is an important part of the Council's adopted Open Spaces Strategy. The Project will be delivered in two phases:

- 1: the refurbishment of the West Witney Clubhouse and
- 2: the provision of a new works depot.

The justification for each phase of the project has been discussed and documented in detail over the years. Council has previously agreed in principle that a loan should be taken out for to part-fund the project. This Report to Council summarises the project and its business case, showing the need, the costing and the benefit of the project. This is a crucial document to inform Members whether they wish to vote for or against the resolution detailed at the end of this report.

### West Witney Clubhouse – background and summary business case

The clubhouse was built in 1950's and has heartily served the local community for generations. The West Witney site was acquired by the Council in 1979, part-funded by a loan which has since been paid off.

Witney is a growing town that requires social facilities, and this vital asset now requires renovation.

Witney Town Council is committed to delivering its Open Spaces Strategy and has a strategic remit to get people to move more and look after their health. Recreation grounds with modern facilities attract and encourage all ages of the community to exercise through participation in their chosen sport, benefiting from better health and wellbeing.

The West Witney Recreational Ground is one of the biggest outdoor spaces the town has to offer with many sporting events and activities that include cricket, bowls, a projectile range, football, tennis, and park runs.

The clubhouse needs major refurbishment to maintain the integrity of the building, prolong its life expectancy and improve the energy efficiency and experience for users of the facility.

Additional detail regarding its use and project objectives:

- Currently hosts a substantial number of Witney's Sports Teams & activities, covering 6x sports, with 30 teams and over 1,000 adult and child players including:
  - Tower Hill Football Club - Spartans Football Club - Witney Mills Football Club
  - Witney Swifts Cricket Club
  - Witney Mills Bowls Club & West Witney Bowls Club
  - Witney Tennis Club
  - Oxford Shooting Club
  - Park Run
- Hosts a variety of community groups, that include:
  - Inclusive Art Club
  - Nursery Social Club
  - Youth Clubs
  - Amateur Dramatics Club
- Over 9,000 people use this facility every month demonstrating the level of social value the clubhouse provides.
- Due to poor condition and aging facilities, some clubs and teams are now leaving, and memberships are declining year on year.
- A recent condition survey has identified the requirement of major refurbishment works; without intervention, the clubhouse will have to close within a few years.
- Witney Town Council has allocated £1,000,000 to this phase of the project. It aims to not only restore the social club to its former glory but to improve the facility and make it accessible to all, enabling the club to serve the community for many years to come. The Council will do this by:
  - Making the building structurally sound and creating a modern, attractive appearance.
  - Renovating the exterior using environmentally friendly and energy efficient materials.
  - Ensuring the building is environmentally friendly by installing solar panel roofing, energy saving windows/doors and fuel-efficient heating systems.
  - Redesigning and refitting the ageing changing rooms to create modern, efficient and compliant spaces for young and adult players. This also includes an electronic access system that enables the council to control access and improve the management of this element of the building.
  - Redesigning and refitting the interior to create modern and welcoming social and event areas.
  - Creating a fully inclusive building that is accessible for everyone, including the installation of a disability lift.
- Upon completion of the project our objectives are to:
  - Retain existing adult and youth sports teams and community clubs.
  - Attract new sports teams, especially youth teams.
  - Promote inclusive and female sports teams and players.

- Welcome back clubs who have left (including Darts, Pool, Crib, Aunt Sally and Scouts)
- Ensure the Social Club serves the wider community by raising awareness and promoting the clubs' services to local residents (especially nearby), community groups, local charities and schools.
- Maximise the social value, by welcoming new community groups and attracting new members, by offering cost effective room hire and warm/welcoming atmosphere.
- Regain status as the "go-to" place in Witney.

### **New Depot - background and summary business case**

Witney Town Council are responsible for maintaining Witney's open spaces, sports fields, public halls, cemeteries and associated assets. The council have a dedicated work force made up of 12 operatives, many of whom have a vast amount of experience and tenure with the council. The service provided by our workforce is regularly praised by residents proactively and through resident surveys for the quality of their work making Witney a clean and pleasant place to live.

Up until February 2024 the operations team worked out of an aging, purpose-built depot at the Leys Recreation Ground. A decision was made several years ago to vacate the premises and make the area available for a new project that would rejuvenate the whole of the Leys area into a modern, sports and social facility for the benefit of the community. Consequently, the operational team had to vacate the depot and move into temporary accommodation whilst the council planned the creation of a new depot.

Additional detail regarding its use and project objectives:

- The council vacated the existing depot to make way for Courtside Hub project, which is a new community focussed sports facility bringing a range of much needed activities for all ages to Witney.
- The council are spending in excess of £40k p.a. on rental costs for temporary welfare, maintenance and storage facilities. The Council has explored whether there are suitable sites where these facilities could be rented but this has not been found to be viable.
- The new depot will enable the operational team to work more efficiently, by reducing the need to travel around Witney to different locations, which will enhance the services the council provide to residents.
- The new facility will improve workforce morale and ensure the Council continues to retain staff.
- The new depot will also solve a current storage issue of inside & outside materials and assets, which are currently scattered around Witney.

- In recent years the Town Council has been taking on more sites and facilities which have been created as the town has grown. Following the Government's English Devolution White Paper and the prospect of major local government reorganisation it is highly likely that in the future the Council will work with partner councils to take on more responsibilities. The new depot has been designed to accommodate this expansion with a potentially growing workforce and new equipment storage.

### **West Witney Project**

This project secures the future of the West Witney Clubhouse and the provision of the works depot at this site has allowed the major improvements at the Leys to take place by releasing land for improved sporting and leisure facilities. The new works depot is necessary as the Town Council takes on more sport and leisure facilities which will require servicing and will give the Council the flexibility to respond to the likelihood of more services being taken on from other local authorities because of the re-structuring of local government and the implementation of unitary authorities.

### **Current Situation**

Based on the estimated costings below, the Town Council need to apply for a loan to fund the cost of delivering both phases of the project.

#### Expenditure:

WWSSC building refurbishment	£1,000,000
New build outside services/ works depot	£850,000
Total Project budget	<u>£1,850,000</u>

#### Funding:

Loan	£1,250,000
s.106 contributions (WWSSC building)	£301,975
Council earmarked reserves	£297,509
Revenue	£516
Total funding	<u>£1,850,000</u>

Note that this is an updated version of the estimates agreed for 2025-26 with the loan rounded down to the £1,250,000 and the balancing £516 drawn from revenue.



Members should also note that these are estimates – actual costs will depend on tender returns.

The project timetable was agreed at the meeting on 31 March 2025 and at present it is not considered that there will be any material deviation from this.

### **Application for loan and repayments**

This report gives Members the necessary information to allow a decision to be made regarding whether to proceed with the Project and the loan application.

Members are requested to seek the approval from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of up to £1,250,500 over the borrowing term of 40 years for the delivery of the West Witney Project. Your officers believe that this is at the upper end of the costings, bearing in mind of course that the current volatile international situation could have a major impact on the UK economy and potentially project costs. The 40-year term of the loan is considered to be reasonable for building works which will create and improve fixed assets, which in turn will have a benefit to the council tax payer for at least 40 years, noting it is possible to obtain loan approval for up to 50 years.

If such a loan is approved note that if the full amount is not required, then the Council does not need to draw down the full loan e.g. if project costs amount to £1,800,000 then the loan drawn down could be reduced to £1,200,000.

Loans are usually obtained from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and Councils usually opt for a fixed-rate rather than a variable rate loan. For fixed rate loans there are three options:

- (i) Maturity: half-yearly payments of interest only, with a single repayment of principal at the end of the term. This loads a large burden on the repayments forty years hence and is not recommended.
- (ii) EIP (Equal Instalments of Principal): equal half-yearly instalments of principal together with interest on the balance outstanding at the time.
- (iii) Annuity or ER (Equal Repayments): fixed half-yearly payments to include principal and interest.

Focussing in on EIP and Annuity Loans the latest (18 June 2025) repayment estimates are as follows:

Type of loan	Rate	Half yearly cost	Reduce by... each half year	Total first year cost	Total repayment
Annuity	6.20%	£42,319	£0	£84,638	£3,427,866
EIP	6.12%	£53,682	£472	£106,892	£2,818,250
<i>Budget</i>				<i>£111,860</i>	<i>£4,474,400</i>

Taking out a loan on an annuity basis means that the annual costs remain the same, at £84,638 throughout the 40-year period and compared with an EIP loan the repayments commence at some £22,254 lower than the EIP repayments but will be considerably higher than the EIP repayments later during the term.

With regard to an EIP loan this commences much higher - £106,892 per year but as the principle sum reduces more quickly, so the interest does too and there is a reduction of £472 repayment each half year (i.e. £944 per year). The EIP loan therefore results in a lower total repayment, £3,427,866 compared with £2,818,250 although the impact of inflation would narrow this difference.

At current interest rates repayments for both methods are lower than the repayments allowed for in the 2025-26 budget – a saving of £27,222 for the annuity method and £4,968 (in the first year) for the EIP method, on which the Council's estimates were based.

Members are requested to consider which type of loan – annuity or EIP – should be applied for.

### **Loan affordability**

The Council is required to consider the affordability of the proposed loan. In this regard the RFO advises that the 2025-26 adopted budget clearly shows that the loan repayment provision for the loan being applied for balances out alongside the Council's other income and expenditure. In addition:

The loan repayments accommodated within the Council's budgets since 2024-25 and this has been assisted by the fact that the Council has for many years had a significant capital programme, necessary to maintain its significant asset-base, which includes buildings with a

combined insurance value of £16,142,739 and the loan required is supplemented by s.106 contributions and earmarked reserves (as detailed above).

The Council is required to consider mitigation action against potential default on the loans which hypothetically could be an issue if the Council were to face any future financial difficulty. The guidance refers to this as the Council's Plan B.

In this regard the RFO considers the Council to have considerable financial options and resilience which would mitigate matters:

- The loan repayments are a relatively modest percentage of the precept – between 3.7% and 4.7% of precept (precept £2,297,745) and between 2.9% and 3.7% of gross income, depending on whether an annuity or an EIP loan were to be taken out.
- The property improvements in relation to both the West Witney and the Leys will result in increased income, including rentals, which will help offset the loan repayments. In the event of financial difficulty there are other income lines which would be examined together with ways of reducing expenditure through further efficiencies, reduced service provision and/or contributing less to saving towards future liabilities (earmarked reserves).
- Financial resilience is assisted by the Council's considerable balances in terms of cash (bank balances) and short-term investments which amounted to £3,225,412. It should be noted that £298,000 of this balance is required for the Project and the remainder is in the general revenue reserve, maintained at approximately three months net revenue expenditure as recommended for parish councils plus earmarked reserves. Whilst the latter are reserved for potential future expenditure, in the event of a financial problem then one of the main options for the Council would be to deploy some of these balances to meet the financial requirements.
- The "bottom-line" is that the Council is a precepting authority able to raise income from its local tax-payers and the size of the Council's taxbase – 11,298.35 (i.e. £1 of Council tax in band D generates income of £11,298.35) assists its financial resilience. The Council always seeks to minimise any council tax increase but for a lender this ability for the Council to fund its requirements through precept is a very strong guarantee of the Council's ability to meet its commitments.

### **Three-year projection**

Your officers have been working on the Council's medium-term financial plan and will present to the meeting a three-year financial projection to support the affordability of the loan and the loan application.

### **Consultation results:**

At a meeting of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee on 31 March 2025 Members received an update on the Project and agreed that the Council should undertake public consultation regarding the Project and obtaining a loan to part-fund the works. Note it was not necessary to consult on increasing the precept/ council tax, as the loan repayments are accommodated within the Council's existing budgets.

Conducting a public consultation is a requirement of the loan application process. It helps to ensure our taxpayers are aware of the Councils' intentions and can voice their opinion. The Consultation was conducted in accordance with the guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the National Association of Local Councils. The consultation took place between 16 May and 13 June 2025. A copy of the consultation is attached at appendix A.

Officers are pleased to confirm that the respondents to the survey strongly supported both the project and applying for the loan to part-fund it.

The electronic consultation survey was conducted online and promoted through our website, social media channels and public noticeboards. Physical leaflets were also made available.

A total of 539 responses were received in relation to the consultation, which is an excellent response rate.

The results were as follows:

Are you in favour of improvements to West Witney Clubhouse and the building of a new works depot?

**YES- 509 (95%)**

**NO - 30 (5%)**

Are you in favour of the Town Council taking out a loan of £1,250,516 and repaying the loan over the next 40 years rather than raising the Council Tax significantly for current residents as explained above?

**YES - 493 (92%)**

**NO: 6 (8%)**

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no implications directly resulting from this report. However, the Project will be delivered to meet the Council's obligations and policies regarding this matter.
- b) Biodiversity - no implications directly resulting from this report. The provision of a new depot will significantly assist the Council in relation to its obligation and policies in relation to biodiversity.
- c) Crime & Disorder - no implications directly resulting from this report. However, the Project is being designed to minimise risks arising from crime and disorder.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - no implications directly resulting from this report. However, the Project is being designed to meet the Council's obligations and policies in relation to this matter.

## **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 risk of the Project and loan not being approved will be the potential closure of West Witney Clubhouse, with a catastrophic impact of delivery of leisure and sporting facilities at the site and, without a new works depot, increasing difficulties in delivering outside services in an effective and efficient manner.

In relation to the delivery of the Project itself, a risk register for this large project will be opened by the officers. There are clearly many risks which could lead to delay, poor or non-delivery. These risks are managed by competent staff, the employment of specialists as appropriate and Council scrutiny.

Effective project planning reduces risk and consultation for the project is necessary for the loan application process.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. The West Witney Project will add social value through improved leisure and sporting facilities and gives the scope for further improvements in the future.

## Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report as the Council has already agreed the budgets for this Project, as detailed above. The public consultation is necessary to deliver a major element of the funding required.

## Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Approve this report.
2. Approve officers to seek the approval from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of up to £1,250,000 over the borrowing term of 40 years for the delivery of the West Witney Project. *The annual loan repayments will come to around either (a) £85,000 (annuity loan) or (b) £107,000 (EIP loan year one).* It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments as these have already been provided for in the Council's budget.





Appendix

**WITNEY**  
TOWN COUNCIL



# Consultation

**Proposed Funding for Improvements to  
West Witney Clubhouse and  
Building a New Town Council Depot**

# What is planned and why is it needed?

Witney Town Council has responded to the need for improved infrastructure to support its sports facilities at West Witney Sports Ground.

**West Witney Clubhouse refurbishment** and **new works depot** to a high standard will incorporate:

- Remodelled **changing rooms and showers** to comply with safeguarding regulations.
- **New, accessible function rooms** and community spaces
- **Energy-efficient upgrades**, including a new boiler, windows, doors and cladding.
- **Full disabled access** for all users

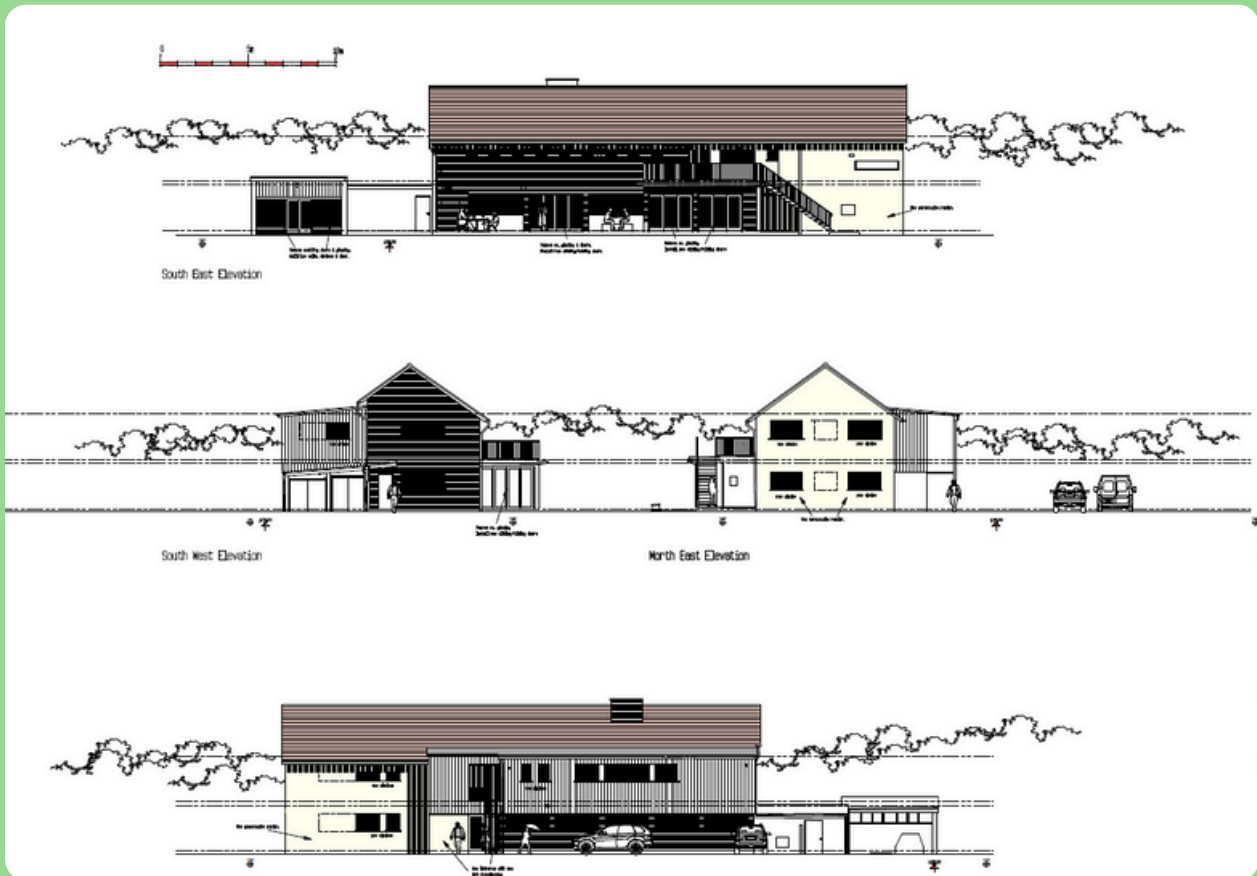
At the same time, a modern works depot will be built at the West Witney site replacing the former Leys depot which now forms part of the The Leys hub which is currently under going construction by our partners Courtside at The Leys

## More information

You can find out more information about the history, background and support for this project on our website

[\*\*link here\*\*](#)





## Plans for the New Clubhouse



## Plans for the New Depot

## How will it be funded?

The Council has budgeted £1,850,000 for the capital works. The Council's financial planning for funding the project has taken place over several years. £600,000 will be funded from reserves and developer funding. The remaining £1,250,000 will be funded through a loan, which the Council has previously agreed in principle. To facilitate this it has already budgeted for the loan repayments, over a 40-year period, from within the Council Tax residents are already charged.

Councils are able to obtain loans at favourable rates. By taking out a loan, the costs of creating or enhancing an asset can be distributed over its lifespan. This approach ensures that the financial burden does not disproportionately fall on current taxpayers, but is instead shared more fairly with those who will benefit in the future.

If the project were to be funded wholly from the council tax, rather than a loan, then the council tax for Witney Town Council would increase from £203 to £314 for one year (Band D) an increase of 54%.

## Consultation Questions

1. Are you in favour of improvements to West Witney Clubhouse and the building of a new works depot?

Yes ☐

No ☐

2. Are you in favour of the Town Council taking out a loan of £1,250,516 and repaying the loan over the next 40 years rather than raising the Council Tax significantly for current residents as explained above?

Yes ☐

No ☐

3. How do you use West Witney Clubhouse and grounds?

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.....

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## FULL COUNCIL



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**Agenda Item:** Civic Announcements

**Meeting Date:** Monday 23 June 2025

**Contact Officer:** Secretary to the Mayor

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The role of Mayor involves chairing the Town Council, sitting as an ex officio voting member on Council Committees, representing and promoting Witney, organising key events in the town in partnership with others, raising funds for local charities, and supporting community activities which contribute to the life of the town and the objectives of the Witney Town Council. The Mayor is supported by the Deputy Mayor, whose attendance in place of or alongside the Mayor is noted in the report below which detailing the activities of the Mayor since the last meeting of the Council.

**This report spans the terms of office of Cllr Owen Collins as Mayor from 14.4.25 to 7.5.25 and from that date Cllr Andy Bailey.**

### Supporting the Community

Witney Beer Festival Reception – St Mary’s Church  
Chair of WODC charity garden party – attended by Deputy Mayor  
Voice Box concert with choir from Cologne – St Mary’s Church  
The Big Lunch – ICE centre Witney  
Summer drinks and jazz charity event Adventure Plus, Clanfield  
Witney Music Festival  
Care Home Open Week – Cedar Court Care Home

### Representing and Promoting Witney

St George’s Day service at St Michael of North Gate, Oxford  
Twinning Association visit to King’s School  
Twinning Association visit to Blanket Hall, lunch and talk  
Air Show – Le Touquet  
Inauguration of Le Touquet-Elizabeth II Airport  
Mayors and Chairs dinner – Dorchester Abbey  
SERFCA Oxon and Bucks Armed Forces Briefing – RAF Benson  
Annual Formal Reception - RAF Brize Norton

### Key Events and Council Activity

Twinning Association Civic Reception and signing ceremony – also attended by Deputy Mayor  
V E Day arrangements – also attended by Deputy Mayor  
Re-opening Splash Park – Deputy Mayor attended  
Pride flag raising  
World Refugee Day flag raising  
Meeting with the Chair of Witney Chamber of Commerce  
Meeting with Open Doors UK

## **Raising Funds -Mayor's Charities 2024-25:**

Mayor's Gala (Cllr Owen Collins) total raised £1,345

APCAM

Yellow Submarine

ABandOfBrothers

***Any hospitality totalling £50 or more afforded to the Mayor whilst undertaking any event as Civic Leader of Witney Town Council will be declared as hospitality in line with the Councillor Code of Conduct & Localism Act 2011. The acceptance of any hospitality does not afford the provider any undue influence or favour in any Town Council business.***

## FULL COUNCIL



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**Agenda Item:** Health and Safety Report

**Meeting Date:** Monday 23 June 2025

**Contact Officer:** Compliance and Environment Officer

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The purpose of this report to update Councillors on Health and Safety across the services and facilities provided by the Council.

### Background

It is the policy of Witney Town Council to comply with our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (as amended), the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended) and other supporting legislation concerning Health and Safety. At all times we endeavour to provide and maintain a healthy and safe working environment for our employees, and to protect the health and safety of all visitors; including contractors, temporary workers and members of the public, who might be affected by our operations.

### Current Situation

In accordance with the approved Witney Town Council Health and Safety Policy Statement 2024, Members are reminded that they have a collective responsibility for the Health & Safety of the organisation.

GH Safety Ltd were appointed in 2024 to implement a Health & Safety Compliance Audit to ensure that key aspects of the Council's undertaking are managed in a proactive way in which all reasonable and practical steps have been taken to manage risk to persons under the Council's duty of care.

Their finding's reported risk is managed to a high standard; the leadership representatives of the Town Clerk and Head of Estates and Operations fully understand their obligations in creating a positive safety culture where tasks are assigned and understood at all levels within the Council.

Departmental managers remain accountable for compliance within their areas of responsibility which is overseen by the Compliance and Environment officer.

The key objectives are to ensure that the Council operates in a lawful manner in respect of health and safety compliance with its service delivery and functions, identifying and advising management and Council of possible risks and finding solutions to mitigate such risks.

### Compliance Table

<b>Compliance Inspection, Testing and Servicing Status</b>	<b>Corn Exchange</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>	<b>Admin Office</b>	<b>Burwell Hall</b>	<b>Temp Depot Windrush Ind. Est.</b>
<b>Fire Risk Assessment</b>	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed 28/05/25. Awaiting Report	Completed
<b>Fire Alarm Testing</b>	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Landlord
<b>Fire Extinguishers</b>	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
<b>Steel fire exit staircase</b>	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Emergency Lighting</b>	Due	Due	Due	Due	N/A
<b>Security</b>	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	N/A
<b>Lift</b>	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Gas Safety</b>	Completed	N/A	N/A	Completed	N/A
<b>Electrical Periodic</b>	Completed 07/03/25. Report being reviewed.	Completed	Completed	Completed	Landlord
<b>PAT Testing</b>	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
<b>Legionella Risk Assessment</b>	Review	Review	Completed	Completed	N/A
<b>Asbestos</b>	Completed	Completed 15/05/25. Report being reviewed.	Completed	Completed	Completed
<b>Air Handling Unit</b>	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Air conditioning</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Completed	N/A

### Stanley Court Temporary Works Depot

The temporary Works Depot at Stanley Court is now operational and in use by the Works Team. Compliance work is currently being carried out in collaboration with the Operations Manager to ensure all necessary standards are met and will be reported at the next Council meeting.

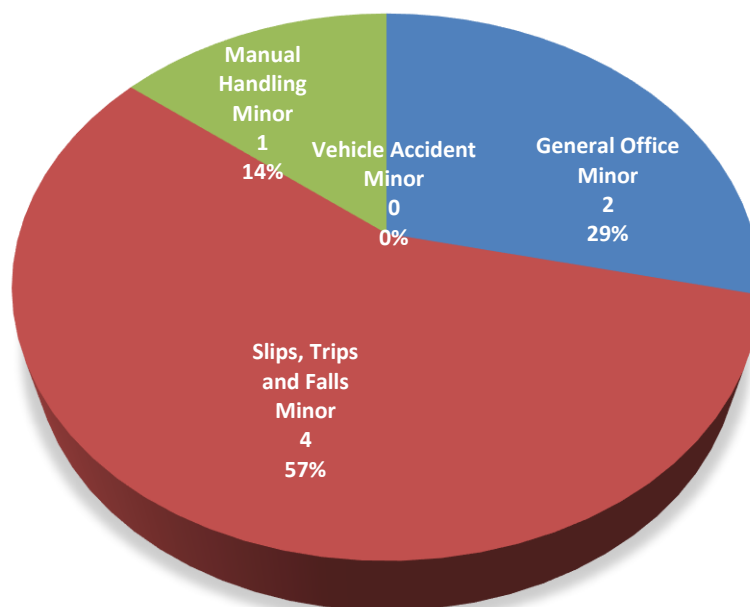
### Training

The Project Officer has successfully completed the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 2015 Principal Designer – Roles and Responsibilities course.

## Health and Safety incidents

- RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)
  - No reportable incidents.
- Accidents/Incidents
  - Two reported accidents/incidents have occurred since the last meeting consisting of the following category and severity and both relate to customers using the Café (chair failure and loss of balance):
    - Slips, trips and falls - Minor.

### Accidents/Incidents over last 12 Months



## Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Ensuring equality in health and safety measures so that all individuals, regardless of their background, job role, or personal circumstances, have equal access to a safe and healthy environment.
- b) Biodiversity plays a crucial role in health and safety measures, influencing public health, workplace safety, and overall environmental well-being.

- c) Crime and disorder pose risks to health and safety in workplaces, public spaces, and healthcare settings. Issues such as violence, theft, and vandalism can compromise safety measures.
- d) The Environment & Climate Emergency is a critical issue that directly impacts health and safety measures in workplaces and communities. It is important to integrate environmental and climate considerations into the council's health and safety policies to protect workers, reduce environmental hazards, and build resilience against climate-related risks.

## **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.

All accidents and incidents are properly documented and investigated with measures put in place in order to prevent reoccurrences.

## **Social Value**

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

There are the broader benefits that the Council generates for employees and the public embedding a safer, healthier, and more productive workforce.

## **Financial implications**

The Council makes budgetary provision in order to carry out its obligations in relation to its statutory compliance checks using external contractors to certify the work accordingly.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report.



## Vandalism

**14/04/2025 – 23/06/2025**

Date	Item/Location	Reported By	Cost if known	Action	Police Reference
29/05/2025	BBOWT Mammal Monitoring Equipment taken - Country Park	BDGS&O	£200	Reported back to BBOWT	None
19/05/2025	Anti Sementic and Homophobic Graffiti in Snipe Meadow Underpass	Cllr Collins	Labour Costs	Removed by Park Ranger	
20/05/2025	Artistic Phallus graffiti – St Marys Church Wall	Deputy Town Clerk	Labour Costs	Removed by Works Team	
24/05/2025	Tree on The Leys graffitied	Admin Office	Labour Costs	Removed by Works team	
30/5/2025	Covid Memorial, one stone broken free of foundation	Operation Manager	Unknown at Present	Stone may need to be lifted and reset into foundation	
02/06/2025	Graffiti on the Buttercross	Operation Manager	Labour Costs	Removed by works team	
11/06/2025	Stone Setts removed from Buttercross Flooring	Compliance Officer	£500	Setts collected and Works Team to reset	DP-14801-25-4343-00

## FULL COUNCIL



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**Agenda Item:** Complaints & Compliments

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 23 June 2025

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

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The purpose of this report is to advise Members of compliments and complaints received regarding services provided by the Council.

### Background

Witney Town Council welcomes all comments, compliments, and complaints as they help identify how it is performing and how services it provides can be improved.

### Current Situation

A list of compliments and complaints, compiled by the PA to the Town Clerk & Secretary to the Mayor between 15 November 2024 and 13 June 2025 is attached for information.

The list encompasses comments either made explicitly as or interpreted as a complaint in line with the Council's Complaints Procedure.

There have been 33 identified compliments/positive comments and 33 complaints/negative comments regarding town council services and all, but 5 more recent ones have been satisfactorily closed. 4 complaints received regarding services provided by other authorities are included for information.

The compliments received are predominantly regarding community events (such as VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary), Corn Exchange events, 1863 café, the Christmas lights display, and parks/vegetation maintenance.

The complaints continue to mainly focus on the Council's open spaces, including accessibility, dogs, bins, and maintenance. There were also comments regarding misleading communications.

In addition to the above comments, the Council is also provided with 31 positive comments and 4 negative made via its social media channels.

Where complaints relate to individual services, these are dealt with by Line Managers and the Senior Management team. It is good practice for the Council to review these complaints and compliments bi-annually to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to provide excellent customer service and governance.

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no direct impact from the report.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact from the report.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact from the report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct impact from the report.

## **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.

There is reputational risk if complaints are not dealt with in a timely and satisfactory manner. Members and Officers must balance resident expectation against agreed policies and available resources. This report highlights the Council takes all complaints/comments seriously and applauds compliments when received.

## **Social Value**

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

Several complaints could be viewed as impeding social value due to their nature.

## **Financial implications**

- There are no financial implications pertaining to this report.

## **Recommendations**

1. Members are invited to note the report and accompanying compliments/complaints list.

## Compliments and Complaints

15 November 2024 to 13 June 2025

	Written/Verbal Compliments Received (official)	No	Written/Verbal Complaints Received (official)	No
Witney Town Council	<p><b><u>Parks &amp; Recreation</u></b></p> <p>Compliment re great job in keeping park clean after groups had left mess</p> <p>Lake &amp; Country Park designated as Local Nature Reserve; dedication, vision and hard work of team</p>	2	<p><b><u>Parks &amp; Recreation</u></b></p> <p>Damage to grass at Raleigh Cres when wood chippings delivered</p> <p>Complaint re use of projectile range by a shooting club</p> <p>Complaint re removal of dog waste bin and replacement sign at Burwell</p> <p>Complaint re Raleigh Cres play area equipment out of action</p> <p>Complaint re signs in Oxlease &amp; Newlands re no dogs off leads</p> <p>Complaint re access to portaloos at WW for parkrun</p> <p>resident unhappy about not permitting use of BBQs on WTC land</p> <p>concern re youngsters smoking at country park</p> <p>Concerns re older children damaging play equipment at Raleigh</p> <p>Complaint re state of bark at Cogges play park</p> <p>Complaint re sand spreading at Burwell</p> <p>Complaint re rough spiky surface at Splash Park</p> <p>Complaint re lack of accessible play equipment at the Leys x 2</p> <p>Complaint about impassable part of the lake for wheelchair users</p> <p>Complaint re location of MUGA on Deer Park</p> <p>Complaint re non blue badge holders using disabled bay at the Leys</p>	16

	<p><b><u>Halls, Cemeteries &amp; Allotments</u></b>  Compliment to V&amp;E team re anniversary fundraising party, helpful before and after event. Caretaker was particularly thanked  Corn Exchange rated excellent; regularly attend jazz evenings  Compliment re ashes interment  Compliment to team re visit regarding ceremonies to be held in CE  Compliment to reception for politeness in booking tickets  Positive feedback re remote arrangements re ashes interment  Thanks from bride and groom re wedding arrangements at CE to reception and events staff  Compliments to admin staff for teamwork helping out at café when short staffed</p> <p><b><u>Stronger Communities</u></b>  Thanks for allowing use of Gallery Room to watch Christmas lights  Thanks for community engagement for Christmas lights  Thanks to staff for Advent Fayre  Compliment re atmosphere and accessibility in Town Centre  Compliment re website; interesting and well presented  Compliments to staff on hard work and dedication at Civic Reception  Compliment re lights display; Witney really is somewhere to be proud of  Thanks for help and support of residents of Riverside Gardens  Thanks to management and staff for taking pride in doing best possible with finite resources</p>	<p>8</p>	<p><b><u>Halls, Cemeteries &amp; Allotments</u></b>  Complaint re wait list for allotments  Complaint re accessibility of Corn Ex re support dogs  Complaint re refused entry to event at CE at capacity  Complaint re boundary fence panels needing replacement  Complaint re items going missing at cemetery</p> <p><b><u>Stronger Communities</u></b>  Disappointment over VE Day advertising  Complaint re Youth Council meeting subjects  Complaint original VE Day afternoon flyer didn't mention ticketed event</p>	<p>5</p>
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	<p>Compliments to staff on Annual Town meeting contributions to its success</p> <p>Compliments to Comms team for effort and professionalism in comms and consistent quality</p> <p>Compliment re town meeting – positive and helpful time together</p> <p>Thanks for splendid reception for French and German guests at civic reception and sourcing Twinning artifacts</p> <p>Compliments for fab VE Day commemoration – well done on organisation</p> <p>Thanks to everyone who contributed to making VE Day a tremendous success</p> <p>Thanks for brilliant VE Day – everyone worked hard and went off without a hitch; heartwarming comments on social media!</p> <p>Thanks to all staff for VE Day – detailed personal thank you for each task</p> <p>Thanks for magnificent day, eve and night; collective efforts. Cllrs and community lucky to have astounding diligent imaginative and dedicated officers</p> <p>Thanks for putting on such an enjoyable and memorable VE 80<sup>th</sup> party</p> <p><b><u>Policy, Governance &amp; Finance</u></b></p> <p>Thanks for donation to Witney Food Bank from Witney Lights</p> <p>Congrats to staff on achievement of Bronze level NALC award scheme</p>	19		3
		2	<p><b><u>Policy, Governance &amp; Finance</u></b></p> <p>Complaint re dangerous and inconsiderate parking by WTC van</p> <p>Complaint re Spotted Witney FB page – hate speech not dealt with by page</p> <p>Complaint re admin of Spotted Witney – Cllrs and family blocked, and opinions could be perceived as official council position</p> <p>Concerns re Spotted Witney nature of posts and overall tone being unmoderated</p>	4

	<b>Climate, Biodiversity &amp; Planning</b> Excellent job by works team on removing pavement vegetation CE/Lakeland/Langdale Gate Thanks to everyone at WTC for keeping Witney beautiful	2	<b>Climate, Biodiversity &amp; Planning</b> Complaint re WTC vehicles crossing bridge at Bishops Farm Mill causing mud and damage Complaint concerning FOI Complaint re how drive left after grass cut by WTC Complaint re WTC van parking on path whilst litter picking Complaint re Perspex damage on bus shelters and foliage growing needing attention	5
		<b>33</b>		<b>33</b>
<b>West Oxfordshire District Council</b>				
<b>OTHER</b>			Complaint re delayed bin emptying not under WTC or WODC remit Complaint re smoke from bonfire at Newland Allotments Complaints from Fernleigh residents re Courtside hub height Compliments re dogs and owners congregating at Coffee Shed- dogs running free and intimidating	4

	Compliments via social media (unofficial)	No	Complaints via social media (unofficial)	No
WTC Facebook	<u>Parks &amp; Recreation</u> Splash Park refurb construction: Will be great to see this open again in the summer – previous concrete structure was off putting so looking forward to new colourful splash park Splash Park new design: Great news! Will look forward to seeing what is done Great news Looks good doesn't it Splash park progress: So wonderful – looking amazing Looks great Looking fab Wow that looks very nice Fantastic work Love the colours Love it V E Day Town Cry: Thank you, the event was very well, organised V E Day 80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary: It was all done so well and such a lovely atmosphere – thank you We loved it very well done Great evening well done Witney Thank you so much to everyone who made it happen; fabulous event, full of enjoyment but not forgetting why we're here Every minute was amazing; well done to all the organisers This is what you call a celebration		<u>Parks &amp; Recreation</u> Complaint re pitch quality at Burwell	1



	West Witney consultation: Lovely that WTC are investing in sports projects with ever expanding housing we need things like this but with extra council tax and development funds would be wonderful to have a new sports centre Opening new splash park: Lovely facilities; pleased TC has invested in this for everyone to use	20		
	<b><u>Halls, Cemeteries &amp; Allotments</u></b> Compliment to works team for how immaculate Tower Hill cemetery is kept	1	<b><u>Halls, Cemeteries &amp; Allotments</u></b>	
	<b><u>Stronger Communities</u></b> Witney Music Festival promotion: thanks for supporting such an amazing event WTC Great to have such a supportive council Awesome – WMF support What Councils Do Wheel: Very useful basic guide; should be circulated to all households Such a very useful graphic Flag half-mast for Bicester Firefighter: A fitting tribute; thank you	6	<b><u>Stronger Communities</u></b> Clothing recycling bin at Burwell: We need general waste bins not clothing bins	1
	<b><u>Policy, Governance &amp; Finance</u></b>		<b><u>Policy, Governance &amp; Finance</u></b> V&E vacancy – Complaint about salary General Operative vacancy –Complaint about salary	2

WTC Instagram	<b>Climate, Biodiversity &amp; Planning</b>		<b>Climate, Biodiversity &amp; Planning</b>	
	Moth webbing: Thanks for posting some people would get the heeby geebies otherwise! Wonderful! A council who doesn't just spray unlike East Riding Yorkshire Council	3		
	Moth webbing: Love this informative post. Actually, seen some in our area and thought omg spiders; good to know these are just moths!	1		
	Removing litter in the river: Nice one – well done			
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>64</b>		<b>50</b>

**From:** Oxfordshire County Council **On Behalf Of** Part Night Lighting

**Subject:** Part-Night Lighting Public Consultation is now live - We look forward to getting your consultation responses

Good Morning,

We are writing to let you know that the public consultation on the proposed Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework is now live on 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' [Part-night lighting and street lighting policy | Let's Talk Oxfordshire](#)

The Consultation is running until midnight on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July.

### **What this consultation is about**

This framework is about how part-night lighting could be implemented in Oxfordshire. It is not about whether part-night lighting is right for specific areas. In September 2025, the council's cabinet will decide whether or not to move forward with part-night lighting. If the decision is to proceed, we are proposing that towns, parishes or Oxford city wards apply for part-night lighting schemes in their areas and that a public consultation is carried out for each scheme.

### **About the framework**

The draft part night lighting framework proposes to introduce part night lighting in Oxfordshire locations where:

- it is requested by the local town or parish council/meeting, or local governance authorities
- the part night lighting exemption criteria does not apply
- local residents have been consulted via a public consultation, as well as stakeholders like the police, night economy employers and community groups
- the part night lighting scheme is approved at Oxfordshire Council Council's Delegated Decision by Cabinet Member for Transport Management

Please can you share this consultation with your residents, local community and stakeholder groups and your Councillors. We very much want to hear back from Parish's and Town Council's on their views and comments on the proposed Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework, as if approved, then Parish and Town Council's would be able apply for part-night lighting schemes in their areas.

Press information and the consultation documents are attached. Printed copies of the consultation are also available; You can request a paper copy of the consultation documents by emailing: [partnightlighting@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:partnightlighting@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (External link) or call the county council's Customer Services Team on 01865 792422 or download it from this page. We will provide a Freepost address on the paper survey form for you to return your completed survey.

Any queries or questions, please let us know. We look forward to getting your consultation responses.

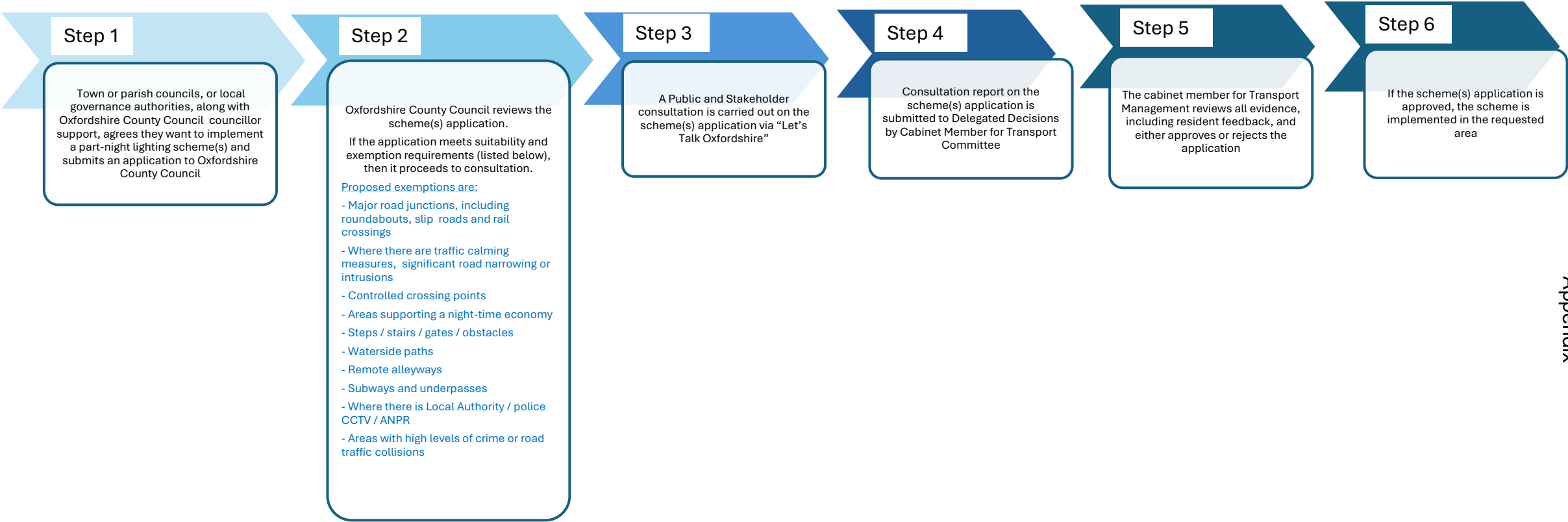
Kind regards,

Highways Maintenance and Road Safety Team, Oxfordshire County Council

## Part Night Lighting Implementation Framework

Step 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town or parish councils, or local governance authorities, along with Oxfordshire County Council councillor support, agrees they want to implement a part-night lighting scheme(s) and submits an application to Oxfordshire County Council</li> </ul>
Step 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxfordshire County Council reviews the scheme(s) application.</li> <li>If the application meets suitability and exemption requirements (listed below), then it proceeds to consultation.</li> <li><u>Proposed exemptions are:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Major road junctions, including roundabouts, slip roads and rail crossings</li> <li>- Where there are traffic calming measures, significant road narrowing or intrusions</li> <li>- Controlled crossing points</li> <li>- Areas supporting a night-time economy</li> <li>- Steps / stairs / gates / obstacles</li> <li>- Waterside paths</li> <li>- Remote alleyways</li> <li>- Subways and underpasses</li> <li>- Where there is Local Authority / police CCTV / ANPR</li> <li>- Areas with high levels of crime or road traffic collisions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Step 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Public and Stakeholder consultation is carried out on the scheme(s) application via "Let's Talk Oxfordshire" <a href="#">Let's Talk Oxfordshire</a></li> </ul>
Step 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation report on the scheme(s) application is submitted to Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Committee</li> </ul>
Step 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cabinet member for Transport Management reviews all evidence, including resident feedback, and either approves or rejects the application</li> </ul>
Step 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the scheme(s) application is approved, the scheme is implemented in the requested area</li> </ul>

# Proposed Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework



## **Part-Night Lighting – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What are the council's legal responsibilities for street lighting?**

There is no legal requirement for local authorities in the UK to provide street lighting. However, where we provide street lighting on public highways (including roads and footways) we do have a responsibility to maintain it. This includes the county councils' streetlights, illuminated traffic signs and bollards on the public highway, but not lighting in private areas, private car parks or on new housing developments.

Not all streetlighting in Oxfordshire is the responsibility of the county council. Some parish and town councils have installed their own street lighting systems, and they are responsible for maintaining these.

### **2. What is part-night lighting?**

Part-night lighting is an approach to dimming, or switching off, streetlighting in an area for part of the night. Over half of local authorities have introduced part-night lighting, with the first schemes being introduced in the 1970s. It is intended to be used at night during the hours when the fewest people are using the streets.

Part-night lighting is not the same as 'Dark Skies'. Dark Skies is a national initiative which aims to conserve night skies, reduce light pollution and increase awareness of the impacts of night light. It encourages responsible outdoor lighting practices and advocates for policies to protect natural night environments.

### **3. Will part-night lighting be compulsory?**

No. Part-night lighting will only be implemented where it has been:

- requested by a town and parish council/meeting, or local governance authority
- supported by the area's County Councillor
- is suitable for part-night lighting and not subject to any of the exemptions outline in the framework
- subject to a public consultation to hear residents' and stakeholders' views
- approved at the council's Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management meeting.

#### **4. Why is the council proposing a part-night lighting framework?**

Implementing part-night lighting can have several benefits, including:

##### **Reducing carbon emissions:**

Last year our street lighting generated over 2,420 tonnes of carbon emissions, around a third of the council's overall emissions and the largest contributor to them.

If lights are switched on for fewer hours, they will use less electricity and carbon emissions will be reduced. We estimate that part-night lighting could reduce energy consumption by over 5,000kWh per day, saving over 400 tonnes of carbon per year. This could also reduce annual spending on energy by over £400,000.

##### **Reducing light pollution:**

Reducing light pollution can boost nature recovery and biodiversity, as it creates an improved night-time environment for wildlife. This is especially true for encouraging nocturnal wildlife, such as moths, nighttime pollinators, some birds, and a wide range of invertebrates.

People can also benefit directly, with evidence linking reduced light pollution to better sleep patterns and the many health benefits that can go hand in hand with this.

#### **5. Is part-night lighting definitely happening in Oxfordshire?**

Yes and no.

Some places in Oxfordshire already have part-night lighting and our current street lighting policy allows for it. This consultation is asking for your views on our draft part-night lighting implementation framework, and is not about removing part-night lighting where it already exists.

But part night lighting is not definitely happening across the whole of Oxfordshire. In September 2025, the county council's cabinet will decide whether to go forward with this framework for implementing part-night lighting.

If cabinet approves the proposed framework, then town and parish councils/meetings, or local governance authorities, will be able to apply to the county council and request part-night lighting schemes for locations in their areas. Applications will also require the support of the area's

Oxfordshire County Council Councillor prior to submission. If the scheme application meets the part-night lighting criteria and following a public consultation on 'Let's talk Oxfordshire', the scheme will go forward for a decision on its approval at the council's Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management meeting. The part-night lighting scheme would be implemented if approved at this meeting. An important part of deciding whether a location is suitable for a part-night lighting scheme will be listening to residents' views through a public consultation on each scheme.

## **6. How can people have their say on part-night lighting?**

There will be several ways in which people can have, or have had, their say on part-night lighting:

- We have already worked with a wide range of stakeholders to develop this framework, including:
  - ✓ Community group representatives
  - ✓ Representatives of women and girls' groups
  - ✓ Emergency services and community safety teams
  - ✓ District, town and parish councillors
  - ✓ Universities and student unions
  - ✓ Employers of shift and nighttime economy workers
- This public consultation gives people the opportunity to share their views on the draft framework for part-night lighting. This is the proposal for how part night lighting could be implemented. The results will inform the cabinet decision in September 2025.
- If the cabinet decision is to move forward with part-night lighting, where the scheme meets the part night lighting criteria and does not include any exempt areas, and there are no technical reasons for part-night lighting not to be implemented in that location, a public consultation on 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' would be held to make sure that local residents', local stakeholders' and community group voices are heard

## **7. Are you listening to vulnerable groups?**

Yes.



To develop this draft framework we engaged with representatives from a range of communities, including people with disabilities, women and girls, LGBTQ+ people, people of different ages, and people from different ethnic and faith backgrounds. They helped us to understand the potential impacts of part-night lighting on their communities and explore how we could mitigate negative effects, and they are sharing this consultation with their communities to make sure that their voices are heard.

As part of this consultation we are asking some (optional) demographic questions, this will help us to understand the different perspectives of different groups.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is being conducted to help us understand how part-night lighting could impact people with vulnerabilities and those with protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010). As well as assessing the potential impacts, the EIA lists actions to be taken, timescales for them to be completed and monitoring arrangements. The EIA is considered a 'live document' and will be revisited over the course of the part night lighting programme.

## **8. Would part-night lighting be the same across the whole county?**

No, part-night lighting is not a one size fits all approach. It could be implemented in different ways to meet the needs of different communities.

We are considering two 'standard' timeframes for part night lighting:

- Between 11:30 pm and 05:30 am in **rural** locations
- Between midnight and 05:30 am in **urban** locations

This is based on when the fewest people are using roads and paths, and when the last trains and buses run. These times could be tailored for an area's individual needs (e.g. if the last trains arrive after midnight). There may also be temporary variations for legitimate reasons such as public events or road works.

There will be some factors which may make a location unsuitable for a part-night lighting scheme, such as at road crossings, if there are high levels of crime or road incidents, or where there is public CCTV. One of the things we're asking for in this consultation is your views on the criteria that would make a location exempt from part-night lighting.

## **9. Why can't you just dim the lights, or use energy efficient lights?**

Many of Oxfordshire's streetlights already use energy efficient lights and dimming technology. As lights have come to the end of their structural life they have been replaced with the newest technology, including LED lights. These new streetlights are already operating more efficiently, saving energy and requiring less maintenance.

## **10. What about the possible effects on crime and road safety?**

We are working closely with Thames Valley Police and other relevant stakeholders, and they have helped to shape this draft framework.

While research has found that there is no significant evidence indicating part-night lighting increases crime rates, or road traffic incidents, we are proposing that locations at high risk of road traffic incidents, or with high levels of crime, be exempt and are not be eligible for part-night lighting schemes. Road traffic incidents and crime levels will also be monitored after a part-night lighting scheme is introduced and changes, including reversal, could be made to the scheme if needed.

Street lighting levels can also affect people's perceptions of safety. We are working with Thames Valley Police to ensure part-night lighting schemes do not take away from the need to deliver well-lit public spaces that provide a sense of safety. Working with Thames Valley Police, we will use data from Street Safe ([StreetSafe | Police.uk](#)) to help us understand how safe people feel in different locations. Street Safe allows you to report any safety concerns you may have about a particular area or location, even when no crime has taken place. You can share your safety concerns anonymously if you wish.

We also encourage you to use our 'Fix My Street' ([FixMyStreet](#)) online tool to report any highway or street safety issues.

## **11. How much would part-night lighting cost?**

The total costs and savings of part-night lighting would depend on:

- how many local areas want to have part-night lighting, and

- the number and type of streetlights affected by each scheme

Each scheme would be different, as it would be tailored to the location's individual needs. This means that we can't give an accurate estimate of the costs at this time, but we can assure you that the cost of implementing part-night lighting would be managed through existing budgets.

## Part-night lighting: Public consultation questionnaire

**Q1. I am responding to this survey as:** (standard OCC survey wording)

- An Oxfordshire resident
- A member of the public living outside of Oxfordshire
- A business (please give the name of the business you represent)
- A representative of a group or organisation (please give the name of the group/organisation you represent)
- A parish, town, district, or county Councillor (please give your name and the parish or town/ward or division you represent)
- Other (please specify)

**Q1a. Question routing for 3 of the possible responses** (open text box):

- A. Please give the name of the business you represent
- B. Please give the name of the group/organisation you represent
- C. Please give your name and the parish or town/ward or division you represent

**Q1b. [If parish, town, district, or county Councillor] Do you think that your area would be interested in the implementation of part-night lighting schemes?**

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- I don't know

**Q2. After reading the [draft framework] and [frequently asked questions], what is your overall view of part-night lighting in Oxfordshire?**

- Completely positive
- Mostly positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Mostly negative
- Completely negative

**Q3. Some factors would make an area unsuitable for part-night lighting, we are calling these 'Exemptions'. The exemptions are listed in the [draft framework].**

**Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in the list of exemptions?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Q3a. [If not 'No'] Please tell us more**

- Open text response

**Q4. We are considering two 'standard' timeframes for part night lighting.**

- Between 11:30 pm and 05:30 am in rural locations
- Between midnight and 05:30 am in urban locations

**This is based on when the least amount of people are using roads and paths, and when the last trains and buses run. These times could be tailored for an area's individual needs (e.g. if the last trains arrive after midnight).**

**Do you think that these are the right timings for rural and urban locations?**

- Right timings for both rural and urban areas
- Right timings for rural areas, but wrong timings for urban areas
- Wrong timings for rural areas, but right timings for urban areas
- Wrong timings for both rural and urban areas
- I don't know

**Q5. Question routing for the possible responses** (open text box):

- A. Please tell us why you gave that answer
- B. Please tell us why you gave that answer, including what timings you think would be right for urban areas
- C. Please tell us why you gave that answer, including what timings you think would be right for rural areas
- D. Please tell us why you gave that answer, including what timings you think would be right for rural and urban areas

**Q6. How often do you currently travel (including walking, wheeling or cycling) between the hours of 11:30PM and 5:30AM?**

- Daily
- Multiple days per week
- Once a week
- Less than once a week
- Never

**Q7. Would the introduction of part night lighting at the proposed 'standard' times affect how you travel?**

**As a reminder, the proposed 'standard' times are:**

- Between 11:30 pm and 05:30 am in rural locations
- Between midnight and 05:30 am in urban locations
- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Q7a. [If not No] Please tell us how and why part-night lighting would affect how you travel**

- Open text response

**Q8. The draft framework says that part-night lighting would only be considered in areas where it is requested by the town and parish councils, or local governance authorities, and supported by the area's Oxfordshire County Councillor.**

**Do you think that these are the right people to be able to request part-night lighting?**

**Please remember that a local public consultation would also take place before any part-night lighting scheme was introduced.**

- Yes
- Partly
- No
- I don't know

**Q8a. [If not Yes] Please tell us who you think should be able to request part-night lighting in an area?** Open text response

**Q9. This image shows the draft implementation process by which a part-night lighting scheme could be introduced. You can also [\[view the image here\]](#).**

**Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this draft implementation process?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Q9a. [If not No] Please tell us more**

- Open text response

**Q10. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed draft implementation framework for introducing part-night lighting in areas in Oxfordshire.**

- Open text response

## **About You**

We would like to know more about you so that we can understand more about our customers and residents, as it helps us to know if we are hearing the views of a wide range of people and communities.

If you do not wish to provide any of this information, please select prefer not to say. All information given is anonymous and is governed by the [General Data Protection Regulations 2018](#)

<b>What is your postcode?</b>
Please provide the first four or five digits of your postcode (but not the letters at the end). e.g. OX1 1 or OX14 5.

<b>What is your age? (Choose one option) *</b>
Under 16
16 - 24
25 - 34
35 - 44
45 - 54
55 - 64
65 – 74
75 - 84
85 or over
Prefer not to say

<b>What is your sex? (Choose one option) *</b>
Female
Male
Prefer not to say
I use another term (please state here)

<b>Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (Choose one option)</b>
Yes
No
Prefer not to say

<b>What is your sexual orientation? (Choose one option)</b>
Straight/Heterosexual
Bisexual
Gay or Lesbian
Prefer not to say
Other sexual orientation - please state:

<b>What is your ethnic group or background? (Choose one option)*</b>
Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any other Asian background)
Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, or any other Black background)
Chinese
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and any other mixed background)
White (British, Irish, or any other white background)
Prefer not to say

Other ethnic group or background (please specify)
---

<b>What is your current religion, if any? (Choose one option)</b>
Buddhist
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
Hindu
Jewish
Muslim
Sikh
No religion
Prefer not to say
Any other religion (please state below)

<b>Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? (Choose one option) *</b>
Yes - a lot
Yes – a little
No
Prefer not to say

### **Data protection and privacy \***

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, we (Oxfordshire County Council) have a legal duty to protect any personal information we collect from you. Oxfordshire County Council is committed to open government and this may include quoting extracts from your consultation response in our report.

We will not however, disclose the names of people who have responded unless they have provided consent. For this purpose, we ask that you are careful not to disclose personal information in your comments – for example the names of service users or children. If you do not want all or part of your response to be made public, or shared with councillors, please state below which parts you wish us to keep confidential.

View Oxfordshire County Council's privacy notice online at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/privacy-notice)

<b>Please use this space to tell us if there is any specific part of your response you wish to keep confidential:</b>
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### Stay in touch \*

We invite you to sign up to get regular email updates on news, events, and developments from across the county.

*Any contact details you provide will be separated from the feedback you have shared in this survey.*

<b>Would you like to sign up?</b>
Yes, I'd like to receive updates about activities on Let's Talk Oxfordshire
Yes, I'd like to sign-up to get regular updates on the county's news, events, and developments from the council.
Yes, but I would only like to be kept informed about this consultation
No thanks

<i>If you have chosen 'Yes' for 'Would you like to sign-up?'</i>
<b>Please provide your email address below</b> <i>(Question routing for three of the possible responses)</i>

**Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions**

Document is Restricted



**Matthew Barber**  
Police & Crime Commissioner  
for Thames Valley

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[www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk)

To Town Councils; Parish Councils & Parish Meetings

10 April 2025

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to update you on some of the working going on across Thames Valley to cut crime and catch more criminals.

The headline figures are positive. Overall crimes is down across Thames Valley by nearly 2%. This means that there were more than 2,000 less crimes in the 12-months to February compared with the previous year (and more than 3,000 less crimes compared to the year before that). Some of the biggest reductions have been in residential burglary, knife crime and vehicle crime.

There is of course more work still to do. Although cutting crime remains the priority – ensuring less people become victims in the first place, it is of course vital that criminals are brought to justice. This is a commitment shared by the Chief Constable and I am encouraged that the number of “positive outcomes” (solved crimes in plain English) has increased by 14% in the last year.

These improvements can only continue if the public have confidence to report crime and other incidents to the police. We know that one of the barriers in the past has been the delays in answering 101 calls. I am pleased to report that the average time to answer calls from January to March this year has been well under three minutes. This is an area I will continue to focus on, and we are bringing in further improvements to both the online and telephone contact to make it easier to report issues to the police.

Our neighbourhood policing teams are vital to tackling crime locally as well as engaging with your community. Working with the Chief Constable over recent years we have doubled the number of neighbourhood officers across the Force and I have now been successful in bidding to the Government for funding to recruit an additional 68 neighbourhood police officers.

Although resources need to be focussed on cutting crime and catching criminals, reporting back to communities is important. The connection between local councils and local neighbourhood teams is an important part of that, both in terms of representing community concerns to the police and in sharing the activity of what the police are doing to make our communities safer. To that end I would be grateful if you could contribute to a short survey to understand how Thames Valley Police could improve their links with your council: <https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/local-council-survey/>.

As always please do feel free to contact me or my office if we can support your local council in our collective efforts to keep the public safe and I would be delighted to come and meet with you locally.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Barber  
Police & Crime Commissioner

**Neighbourhood Policing engagement survey**

Introduction from Matthew Barber (Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley)

Communication with communities is vital; local councils are an important part of that. Although resources need to be focussed on cutting crime and catching criminals, reporting to communities is important.

Activity of Neighbourhood Policing teams is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, but I want to seek views in order to inform conversations with the Force to get the best, more efficient and effective way of reporting.



**Matthew Barber**

Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley

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Level of contact with Neighbourhood Policing team

1. How satisfied are you with the current level of contact you have with your local neighbourhood team?

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

2. What contact do you currently have with your local neighbourhood team? Please select all that apply:

- Attendance on request at public meetings
- Direct contact in person outside of meetings
- Direct contact via telephone/email
- Occasional attendance at public meetings
- Regular attendance at public meetings
- Regular written report
- Written report on request
- None
- Other - please specify:

3. What level of contact would you like to have with your local neighbourhood team? Please select all that apply:

- Attendance on request at public meetings
- Direct contact in person outside of meetings
- Direct contact via telephone/email
- Occasional attendance at public meetings
- Regular attendance at public meetings
- Regular written report
- Written report on request
- None
- Other - please specify:

4. What information would you find useful in neighbourhood policing reports?

- Comparison with other areas
- Force-wide statistics
- Local crime statistics
- Narrative report on local issues
- Other - please specify:

5. What level of contact would you like to have with your local [Independent Advisory Group](#)? Please select all that apply:

- Attendance on request at public meetings
- Direct contact in person outside of meetings
- Direct contact via telephone/email
- Occasional attendance at public meetings
- Regular attendance at public meetings
- Regular written report
- Written report on request
- None
- Other - please specify:

6. If you have any additional comments, please detail below: