

Full Council

Meeting of Witney Town Council

Monday, 6th October, 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 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 **prior to the meeting**, stating the reason for absence.

Standing Order 8(e)(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 - 15)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28 July 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 25. 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 (if appropriate).

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 5 August 2025 and 22 September 2025, and agree the RECOMMENDATIONS contained therein.

- a) **Planning & Development Committee - 5 August, 26 August & 16 September 2025** (Pages 16 - 30)
- b) **Parks & Recreation Committee - 1 September 2025** (Pages 31 - 36)
- c) **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8 September 2025** (Pages 37 - 40)
- d) **Climate & Biodiversity Committee - 9 September 2025** (Pages 41 - 46)
- e) **Stronger Communities Committee - 15 September 2025** (Pages 47 - 55)
- f) **Policy, Governance & Finance Committee - 22 September 2025** (Pages 56 - 65)

9. **Working Group Membership**

SC521(1) – To note the recommendation, 'that, a Working Party be created to explore ideas celebrating national pride' and elect up to five Councillors to this group.

SC526 – To note the recommendation, 'that, establishment of a Town Centre Forum be approved with Witney Town Council carrying out administration of the Forum, and that three councillors to join the Forum be elected at the meeting of the Council on 6 October 2025.'

10. **Conclusion of Audit for Year Ending 31 March 2025** (Pages 66 - 72)

To receive the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (R.F.O) and note that the Council's External Auditor, Moore, have completed the review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year ended 31 March 2025, and in their opinion the information is in accordance with Proper Practices (External Audit Report & Certificate 2024/25 and Notice of Conclusion of Audit for year ended 31 March 2025 are also enclosed).

11. **Motion - Support for West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT)**

To consider a proposed motion and resolution concerning support for West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT) in accordance with Standing Order 18.

This motion is brought to Full Council at variance with the decision made via a vote at Stronger Communities.

WOCT requested an additional £2500 for Witney routes in order to maintain a reliable and sustainable service. The committee voted 4:3 to turn down the request. The names of councillors voting each way were recorded.

Cllr Ashby in his capacity as a County Councillor wrote to OCC asking them to increase their WOCT funding. The outcome of discussions between OCC and WOCT is awaited.

It is appropriate for Full Council to pause, consider and vote on this matter, rather than accepting the recommendation of the spending committee without question at the minutes stage, because of the likely grave impact of the committee's decision on vulnerable residents. Witney Town Council has a strong record of working with WOCT and listening to its honest assessment of funding needs and should consider whether the evidence of need outweighs any reticence among members to extend the grant by this relatively low-risk sum.

Witney Town Council resolves, in acknowledgement that WOCT provides an essential community bus service for the residents of Witney, to increase the grant by £2,500, if this need is not met by OCC as an outcome of their September/October meeting with WOCT.

The sum can be taken from a supplementary estimate from the general reserve.

Proposed by: Cllr Ruth Smith

Seconded by: Cllr Rachel Crouch

Agenda Continues Over the Page

12. **Motion - Recommendations from Spending Committees in PGF Reports**

To consider a proposed motion and resolution concerning recommendations from spending in Policy, Governance & Finance Committee reports in accordance with Standing Order 18.

The recent case of the WOCT grant decision at Stronger Communities has highlighted a gap in the way recommendations from spending committees are reported. Traditionally, recommendations to spend have been presented to the Policy, Governance & Finance (PGF) Committee, and then to Full Council through minutes, while decisions not to spend have not been formally recorded in the same way.

This practice makes it harder to scrutinise the work of spending committees and limits the Council's ability to make fully informed decisions.

Witney Town Council therefore resolves:

1. *That all decisions of spending committees—both affirmative and negative—be clearly summarised to PGF, so that scrutiny of decisions is complete and transparent, and overall decision-making is improved.*
2. *That this principle be applied immediately and for the remainder of this term of office.*
3. *That when the Financial Regulations are next reviewed (June 2026), they be amended to include the following:*

Amendment to Financial Regulations

Where a recommendation on expenditure is not carried by a Spending Committee, the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee reserves the right to re-examine the matter at its meeting. The PGF Committee may overturn the decision if additional information is presented that demonstrates a clear public need and its affordability, within an existing budget or supplementary estimate from the General Fund.

Proposed by: Cllr Ruth Smith

Seconded by: Cllr Georgia Meadows

13. **Climate Action Plan** (Pages 73 - 81)

To receive the minutes of the Climate Action Plan Working Party held on 25 September 2025 and accompanying report concerning 2026-27 budget-setting.

14. **Public Convenience Provision in Witney** (Pages 82 - 85)

To receive and consider the report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O.

15. **Consultation - High Street & Market Square (Witney) Proposed Highway Improvements** (Pages 86 - 111)

To receive updated documents from Oxfordshire County Council concerning this scheme and consider a response, if appropriate.

16. **Civic Announcements** (Pages 112 - 113)

To receive the report of the Mayor & Mayor's Secretary.

17. **Health & Safety** (Pages 114 - 117)

To receive an update from the Compliance & Environment Officer on health and safety items.

18. **Vandalism & Anti Social Behaviour** (Pages 118 - 119)
To receive an update showing the latest vandalism to Council property and reported Anti-Social Behaviour.
19. **Future of Local Government in Oxfordshire** (Pages 120 - 126)
To receive an consider the report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O.
20. **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.
21. **Correspondence**
To receive any correspondence received (if applicable).
- a) **NALC - Seizing The Opportunity of Devolution** (Pages 127 - 129)
To receive notice of an open letter from the National Association of Local Council's (NALC) circulation concerning devolution.
- b) **Civility & Respect Project Newsletter** (Page 130)
To receive notice of the National Association of Local Council's (NALC) latest Civility & Respect newsletter.
- c) **OCC Response to Resident Survey Feedback** (Pages 131 - 135)
To receive a response from Oxfordshire County Council to a letter issued concerning feedback in the Witney Town Council annual resident's survey. Minute no: F425(4) refers.
- d) **WODC Response to Resident Survey Feedback** (Pages 136 - 137)
To receive a response from West Oxfordshire District Council to a letter issued concerning feedback in the Witney Town Council annual resident's survey. Minute no: F425(4) refers.
- e) **Certificate of Adoption - Thorney Leys (Guild Close) Witney: 410.203 S38** (Page 138)
To note that works required under the Agreement entered into under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 between Abbey Developments Limited and Oxfordshire County Council dated the 24th April 2024 relating to housing development have been completed, and Oxfordshire County Council has accepted liability for the future maintenance of the works as Highway Maintainable at Public Expense.
22. **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.
23. **Longstanding Service Recognition - Town Clerk/C.E.O**
To recognise the 25 years long-standing service of the Town Clerk/C.E.O, Sharon Groth.
24. **Sealing of Documents**
To receive details of documents sealed by the Council (If applicable).

25. **Exclusion of Press & Public**

To consider and if appropriate, to pass the following resolution:

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions 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.

26. **Property & Legal Matters**

To receive a confidential verbal update from the Town Clerk on property and legal matters, if appropriate.



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.

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 28 July 2025

At 7.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	J Doughty	R Crouch
	O Collins	G Doughty
	G Meadows	D Newcombe
	J Aitman	J Robertshaw
	T Ashby	S Simpson
	D Temple	J Treloar
	A Mubin	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer &
		Committee Clerk
Others:	One member of the public.	

441 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Enright, R Smith & D Edwards-Hughes.

442 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

443 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 June 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Council meeting held 23 June 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

Cllr S Simpson joined the meeting at 6:03pm

444 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

445 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Apologies had been received from Inspector C Ball who was unfortunately unable to attend or send a representative.

Members discussed Police related issues such as an increase in anti-social behaviour and littering at the Tiny Forest, homeless occupation in the churchyard of St Marys Church and disregard by some motorcycle users in the town in respect of loud or adapted exhaust systems for which they believed there were regulations to limit the noise output, and therefore a matter that TVP should deal with.

Officers advised that Members concerns would be passed onto the Witney neighbourhood police team.

A Member of the public joined the meeting at 6:05pm.

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

Oxfordshire Country Council

Cllr T Ashby provided an update on the Oxford daily congestion charge, proposals to reduce household waste centre opening days & times, and Witney High Street redevelopment which had been delayed until 2026. He advised ANPR cameras would be installed before the end of 2025.

West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr R Crouch advised that a successful event to promote mental health wellbeing had been held with thirteen local providers participating; she explained that the providers number one need was for suitable space in Witney and that if Members were aware of any suitable space that these groups could use to speak with her.

Cllr Crouch also updated Members of the progress of the Council of Sanctuary programme and that it was hoped that the related training scheme could be rolled out to parishes to support those Officers and Councillors.

Cllr J Aitman highlighted the Wellness & Awareness event on 17 August being held in the Langdale Hall by Tough to Talk. A mental health support organisation,

Resolved:

That, the updates be noted.

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

Cllr R Crouch provided an update from the Witney Town Charity and advised there were no issues with the alms houses after recent inspections and briefly touched on the rough sleeper raised above which was in the vicinity, of which Cllr J Doughty endorsed.

Cllr R Crouch updated Members that the Witney Education Foundation would be carefully considering any future grant requests due to limited funding being available.

Cllr J Aitman encouraged any Members with casework that involved residents of the Cogges area to who were in need of financial assistance to get in contact with her directly as a Cogges Welfare Trust representative.

Resolved:

That, the updated be noted.

448 **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 24 JUNE & 15 JULY 2025**

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

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 24 June & 15 July 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

449 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 30 JUNE 2025**

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

PR393 – Cllr T Ashby advised that the location of the MUGA at Raleigh Crescent had been assigned and would be as detailed in the report that was presented to the Committee on 30 June.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 30 June 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

450 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 7 JULY 2025**

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

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 7 July 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

451 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 14 JULY 2025**

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

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 14 July 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

452 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 21 JULY 2025 (AND 23 JUNE 2025)**

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

F426 – Cllr T Ashby asked that it be noted that he was not in agreement with the amendment relating to “groups and forums”.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meetings held on 23 June and 21 July 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

453 **CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY - 22 JULY 2025**

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

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 22 July 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

454 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

455 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Council received the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer regarding Health & Safety matters.

The Town Clerk/CEO also provided a verbal update on work required to make repairs to the timber climbing towners installed approximately 10 years ago at The Leys and Burwell play areas. The repairs had been identified by ROSPA as being a possible hazard requiring a specialist inspection to determine the level of safety. Further inspections had been completed by HUCK’s, the supplier and installer of the equipment who had advised that the towers must be kept closed and that the estimated repairs would be £6,000 for The Leys and £11,500 for Burwell with a lead time of six weeks. These repairs would provide an additional 5 years’ worth of play.

The Town Clerk had instructed the work using the delegated powers and payment would be made from the Play Equipment Earmarked reserve which stood at £75,000.

A Member expressed their disappointment that the examinations by RoSPA had not been carried out at a time that would then allow for any defects to be fixed without an impact on school holiday periods when the equipment would be in high demand.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the work to repair the wooden climbing towers are authorised and,
3. That, Officers arrange for the annual inspection to be undertaken over the winter period.

456 **VANDALISM & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Council received a list of Vandalism and anti-social behaviour incidents since the last meeting.

Members were disappointed to hear of the additional costs to repair the COVID memorial at the Leys following it being vandalised and questioned if the position of the memorial should be reconsidered. Cllr O Collins provided a summary of the reasoning behind its positioning, and it was agreed that the situation of further risk of vandalism be monitored. Additionally, it was agreed that the Stronger Communities Committee be asked to review how the memorial can be promoted to highlight its significance.

The Committee Clerk provided a verbal update on a report of vandalism that had been reported earlier that day in relation to the anti-social activity at the Tiny Forest. The police had been asked to increase its patrols.

Several Councillors raised the subject of abandoned bikes and other equipment in the town centre which they felt brought a negative impression and may constitute fly tipping.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Stronger Communities consider the promotion of the COVID memorial and,
3. That, officers report any long-term abandoned bikes to the Windrush Bike Project to see if they can utilise parts.

457 **COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS & REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk relating to changes to Committee positions and a nominated elected trustee to represent the Council.

Members were unanimous in their agreement of Cllr D Temple being appointed as a replacement on the Park & Recreation Committee and also as the replacement Council liaison to Witney Flood Group replacing Cllr T Ashby & Cllr J Robertshaw respectively.

Also, it was agreed unanimously that Cllr G Meadows represent the Council on the Henry Box Book Collection Trust following the request from Mrs E Duncan to resign her position.

Resolved:

1. That, Cllr D Temple replace Cllr T Ashby on the Parks & Recreation Committee and,
2. That, Cllr D Temple replace Cllr J Robertshaw as Liaison to Witney Flood Group and,
3. That, Cllr G Meadows replace the retiring Mrs E Duncan on the Henry Box Book Collection Trust.

458 **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Council received the draft of the Corporate Strategic Plan as had been presented to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 21 July. The Town Clerk/CEO advised that work would continue on the plan over the summer period and asked that Members provide any feedback once they had reviewed fully the document.

The Plan had been included so as to assist Members in their decision on the submission of a response to West Oxfordshire District Councils Local Plan 2041 consultation.

A Member raised whether it was necessary to include details of the political control of the Council prior to 2019.

Resolved:

That, the draft plan be noted.

During the following Agenda Item - Cllr J Treloar left the meeting at 7:50pm and re-joined at 7:57pm.

459 **WITNEY OXFORD TRANSPORT GROUP**

The Council received the notification of the Witney Oxford Transport Group's response to the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan Consultation.

The Chair also updated the Council on the recent West Oxfordshire District Council scoping document that had been compiled to provide details on the costs, economic benefits and changes to transport use. This indicated a £50m uplift to Witney's economy and a reduction of 600,000 car journeys through the town.

Concerns were raised that should a railway be introduced that it would have a negative effect on the surrounding green spaces however the Council was supportive of public transport plans that would alleviate the issues of the A40 traffic which in their view were unsustainable.

The Council also showed concern for the funding of a railway given the lack of infrastructure which was already affecting the growth of Witney both business and residential. It considered that the town be eligible for funding from the Oxford to Cambridge funding.

Resolved:

That, the update be noted.

460 **WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN 2041**

The Council received the town council response to the Local Plan 2041 consultation which had been drafted by the Planning and Development Committee.

Members were satisfied it incorporated the principles of the town council's strategic plan and highlighted concerns raised by the Council and its Committees. In response to the above item, it was agreed a further comment should be added regarding alternative transport options to the oversubscribed A40.

Resolved:

1. That, the response to the Local Plan 2041 consultation be approved with the following addition,
2. That, the Local Plan should address the need for sustainable transport and infrastructure solutions in and around Witney, where current limitations were constraining growth and a lack of investment. In particular, options to alleviate pressure on the A40 should be explored and carefully balanced with the need to protect green spaces and local natural environments.

461 **FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OXFORDSHIRE**

The Town Clerk/CEO provided a verbal update regarding the progress of her contact with Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council and West Oxfordshire District Council on their proposals on Local Government reorganisation in 2027.

The Town Clerk had also attended an Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils event the previous week and provided details of the discussions had. Additionally, she provided clarification on the approach that dual and triple hatted councillors should take when considering the devolution proposals due to their pecuniary interests. This had been provided by OALC in the form of an email which was distributed to all Members.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Councillors note the guidance of OALC in relation to Dual and Triple hatted Members.

462 **A40 BARNARD GATE JUNCTIONS - EXPERIMENTAL TRO**

The Council received the correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council in relation to a proposed Experimental Traffic Order.

Members believed that the order did not go far enough as it did not consider the issues faced by vehicle use of the opposite South Leight junction and would only push any potential accident location to further along the road towards Eynsham.

It was agreed to delegate the response to the Planning & Development Committee to consider further at their meeting of 5 August 2025.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, the response be delegated to the Planning & Development Committee.

463 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

In the absence of the Leader, the Deputy Leader advised there was no official communication but wished Members a good summer and encouraged them to enjoy the sabbatical from Committee Meetings, however she noted Councillors casework historically increased over the same period.

Resolved:

That, the update be noted.

464 **PART-NIGHT LIGHTING CONSULTATION - OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Members were disappointed to receive the correspondence as they had already made the Council's position clear on the proposals for part night lighting.

It was also noted that the poll issued was very basic and did nothing to gather anything other than a yes, no, or maybe response.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

465 **POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER - NEWSLETTERS**

The Council received the most recent Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner newsletters.

Resolved:

That, the PCC newsletters be noted.

466 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

In the absence of the Leader the Deputy Leader took questions from Members.

Cllr J Doughty asked that consideration be given to re-siting the Mayoral board currently displayed in the Chamber Room of the Town Hall. As the Chamber was no longer in use it should be considered so as the public can view it. In response the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that this was something already under consideration.

The Mayor asked that the Deputy Leader join him in expressing congratulations to the England Women's football team on their victory in the Euro 2025 competition which was duly and enthusiastically provided.

467 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no items sealed since the last meeting.

Resolved:

That, the seal of the Council be affixed to any documents arising from decisions taken by this meeting of the Council.

The meeting closed at: 8.20 pm

Chair

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 8a

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 5 August 2025

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

Present:

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman J Doughty	D Temple
Officers:	Adam Clapton Cara Murray	Deputy Town Clerk Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning
Others:	None	

P468 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Smith.

P469 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

P470 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

P471 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.

P472 APPLICATION FOR MINOR VARIATION OF PREMISES LICENCE - CO-OP STORE, 9 - 11 HIGH STREET WITNEY - W/25/00760/PRMMV

The Committee noted the Application for Minor Variation from Co-op Store, 9 - 11 High Street Witney under the Licencing Act 2003.

Given the short statutory timescale for Witney Town Council to respond, by prior agreement of West Oxfordshire District Council, documents were circulated electronically to members of this Committee.

Resolved:

That, a no objection response was forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council on 30 July 2025.

P473 **OCC CONSULTATION - A40 BARNARD GATE JUNCTIONS (EYNSHAM) - PROPOSED EXPERIMENTAL RIGHT TURN PROHIBITION**

The Committee received and considered Oxfordshire County Council's proposed Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) for the A40 Barnard Gate junctions. Submission of the Councils response had been delegated to the Committee by the meeting of the Council (Minute 462 28.07.2025 Refers)

Members agreed on the following response for submission:

Members welcome the County Council's focus on this long-standing area of concern. However, the Committee had several important observations and concerns to raise:

1. Incomplete Crash Data:

Members felt that the crash data referenced in the proposal appears incomplete and does not provide a full picture of incidents along this stretch of the A40. As a result, the justification for the proposed measures seems insufficient and may not reflect the true scope of the safety issues.

2. Omission of South Leigh Junction (Westbound):

There is particular concern that the proposal does not include any restrictions for the South Leigh junction westbound. Members fear that implementing right-turn bans at the Barnard Gate junctions without addressing this nearby junction could simply shift the safety risk further down the road, particularly toward lay-by areas, creating a new accident hotspot rather than resolving the problem.

3. Need for a Broader, More Integrated Solution:

While the Committee supports OCC's renewed attention to this high-risk area, they are disappointed by the limited scope of the current proposal. A more comprehensive strategy is needed to address safety along the wider stretch of the A40.

4. No Right Turn Restrictions:

The Committee would strongly support a 'no right turn' restriction from the A40 into both Barnard Gate junctions. Members believe this would reduce conflicting traffic movements and improve safety—similar to the successful layout used near the Esso garage further along the A40. The Committee is grateful for the opportunity to provide input at this early stage and encourages Oxfordshire County Council to consider a more holistic approach to ensure lasting safety improvements along this route.

Resolved:

That, the above submission be made to Oxfordshire Country Council.

The meeting closed at: 6.26 pm

Chair

471- 3	WTC/085/25	Plot Ref :-25/01606/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	17/07/2025
	Location :- UNIT 6 MARRIOTTS WALK MARRIOTTS WALK		Date Returned :-	06/08/2025
	Proposal :	Conversion of existing unused unit to create a micro brewery and taproom/cafe to include replacement frontage, provision of outdoor seating and extraction/ventilation/heating system.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council welcomes and supports this application.		
	Members are pleased to see a currently vacant and previously unused unit within Marriotts Walk being brought into active and meaningful use. The proposed microbrewery, taproom, and café will contribute positively to the vitality of the area, enhance the local economy, and increase footfall in this part of the town- all of which are strongly supported by Members and policy E1 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.			
	In particular, Members were encouraged by the social value underpinning the proposal, specifically the applicant's commitment to supporting ex-service personnel (Veterans) through employment, skills training, and access to mental health support.			

471- 4	WTC/086/25	Plot Ref :-25/01614/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	18/07/2025
	Location :- 45 HIGH STREET HIGH STREET		Date Returned :-	06/08/2025
	Proposal :	Alterations to shop frontage to remove exiting bay window.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

471- 5	WTC/087/25	Plot Ref :-25/01583/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	21/07/2025
	Location :- BUILDING 3, WINDRUSH PARK ROAD WINDRUSH INDUSTRIAL PARK		Date Returned :-	06/08/2025
	Proposal :	Demolition of existing industrial building and erection of two light industrial/warehouse units with mixed E(g)(iii), B2 & B8 uses, ancillary offices, car parking , service areas and soft landscaping.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections to this application.		
		Members felt that the proposed development represents a more efficient and appropriate use of the site. The updated layout, including provision for parking, service areas, and landscaping, appears well considered.		
		The Committee welcomes the creation of new employment space in the town, particularly within a designated industrial area, and supports opportunities that contribute to the continued economic growth and vitality of Witney as outlined in policy E1 of the West Oxfordshire Plan 2031		

471- 7	WTC/089/25	Plot Ref :-25/01740/PN42	Type :-	PRIOR NOTI
	Applicant Name :-		Date Received :-	25/07/2025
	Location :-	17 HOLFORD ROAD HOLFORD ROAD	Date Returned :-	06/08/2025
	Proposal :	Erection of a single storey rear extension (4m x 3m height to eaves/2.2m max height).		
	Observations :	While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.		

471- 9	WTC/091/25	Plot Ref :-25/01733/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-		Date Received :-	30/07/2025
	Location :-	29 BURWELL MEADOW BURWELL MEADOW	Date Returned :-	06/08/2025
	Proposal :	First floor rear extension.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 26 August 2025

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

Present:

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

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

P474 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

P475 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

P476 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

P477 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.

P478 WELCH WAY - PROPOSED RAISED PARALLEL CROSSING

The committee received and considered the correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council regarding changes at the Fiveways Roundabout with the proposed introduction of a raised parallel crossing.

Members agreed that the follow submission be made.

Members welcomed any measures that reflect the changes to the Highway Code giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists at junctions and thus greater protection. The proposed scheme also highlights these rights of ways and their visibility to all road users.

Resolved

That, the above submission be made to support the proposed scheme.

P479 **NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL DECISION - 50 NEW YATT ROAD, WITNEY - APP/D3125/D/25/3363662**

The Committee received and considered correspondence concerning the appeal decision APP/D3125/D/25/3363662 for Kingsmead, 50 New Yatt Road, Witney.

Resolved:

That, the appeal decision be noted.

P480 **NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL - 1 SYCAMORE CLOSE, WITNEY - APP/D3125/D/3370522**

The Committee received notification of Planning Appeal APP/D3125/D/25/3370522 in respect of 1 Sycamore Close, Witney

Resolved:

That the notification of the Planning Appeal be noted.

The meeting closed at: 6.33 pm

Chair

477- 4

WTC/097/25

Plot Ref :-25/01772/S73

Type :-

VARIATION

Applicant Name :- .

Date Received :-

06/08/2025

Location :-

11 DONNINGTON CLOSE
DONNINGTON CLOSE

Date Returned :-

27/08/2025

Proposal :

Variation of conditions 2 and 4 of planning permission 24/02387/HHD to allow the front (NE elevation) external wall of garage to be constructed re-using bricks from demolition works and for the front facing dormers to be constructed using composite cladding to match NW (side) elevation.

Observations :

Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

477- 5

WTC/098/25

Plot Ref :-25/01829/HHD

Type :-

HOUSEHOLDE

Applicant Name :- .

Date Received :-

11/08/2025

Location :-

70 OXLEASE
OXLEASE

Date Returned :-

27/08/2025

Proposal :

Demolition of rear conservatory and erection of rear single storey extension.
Installation of pedestrian gate in rear fence.

Observations :

Witney Town Council has no objection to the proposed rear extension.

However, with regard to the installation of the pedestrian gate, Members note that the new gate would provide access across amenity land owned by the Town Council. As such, Witney Town Council requests that a formal, written application is submitted for a licence to permit this use.

477- 6

WTC/099/25

Plot Ref :-25/01712/HHD

Type :-

HOUSEHOLDE

Applicant Name :- .

Date Received :-

13/08/2025

Location :-

71 STOW AVENUE
STOW AVENUE

Date Returned :-

27/08/2025

Proposal :

Erection of a single storey rear extension.

Observations :

While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

477- 7

WTC/100/25

Plot Ref :-25/01827/HHD

Type :-

HOUSEHOLDE

Applicant Name :- .

Date Received :-

14/08/2025

Location :-

17 HOLFORD ROAD
HOLFORD ROAD

Date Returned :-

27/08/2025

Proposal :

Erection of a single storey front extension and alterations to increase height of existing garage.

Observations :

While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

The Meeting closed at : 6:33pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- _____ Witney Town Council

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 16 September 2025

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

Present:

Councillor D Temple (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows	T Ashby (In place of J Doughty)
	R Smith	J Treloar (In place of G Doughty)
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Cara Murray	Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning
Others:	None	

P532 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Aitman.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillors G Doughty, and J Doughty, Councillors J Treloar and T Ashby attended as substitutes respectively.

P533 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Due to the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair the Deputy Town Clerk called for nominations for a Chair for the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr D Temple and seconded by Cllr J Treloar that Cllr D Temple be elected. There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Councillor Dean Temple be elected Chair of the meeting.

P534 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

P535 MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 15 July, 5 August, and 26 August 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 15 July, 5 August and 26 August 2025 be approved as correct records of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

P536 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

P537 **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.

P538 **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. Members discussed the current practice of officers marking certain planning applications as "contrary" where planning conditions have been added, in order to ensure these applications were highlighted for the Committees attention. It was noted that this approach had been used to support transparency and to facilitate informed consideration by the Committee.

Members agreed that while the intention behind the practice was understood, the presentation of planning decisions could benefit from further clarity. Officers were, therefore asked to review the format in order to ensure accurate presentation.

Resolved:

1. That, the list circulated advising of WODC planning decisions be noted and
2. That, Officers review the presentation of the report of planning decisions.

P539 **NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL DECISION - 1 SYCAMORE CLOSE, WITNEY - APP/D3125/D/25/3370522**

The Committee received and considered correspondence concerning the appeal decision APP/D3125/D/25/3370522 for 1 Sycamore Close, Witney.

Resolved:

That, the appeal decision be noted.

The meeting closed at: 6.19 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 1 September 2025

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

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillors:	J Treloar	D Temple
	R Smith	G Doughty (In place of J Doughty)
	A Bailey	D Newcombe (In place of J Aitman)
	D Edwards-Hughes	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Adam Cook	Project Officer
	Angus Whitburn	Operations Manager
Others:	Three members of the public. Councillor Georgia Meadows	

PR481 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Aitman and J Doughty, Councillors D Newcombe and G Doughty attended as substitutes respectively.

PR482 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

PR483 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 30 June 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 30 June 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

PR484 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The Committee received representations from representatives of Witney Vikings and Tower Hill Football Clubs concerning Agenda Items 7 & 8.

The representative for Witney Vikings led the participation outlining the clubs plans to work better with the Council and the proposed changes to streamline administration, fee collection and how they could work alongside the Council in the application of grant funding.

The representative from Tower Hill, expressed their pleasure at hearing of the potential collaboration between teams and the Council.

The Committee reconvened.

PR485 FOOTBALL CLUB TRAINING FEES

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 Operations Manager, who also provided a verbal explanation. He confirmed the main issue with training was that it took place on match pitches during the time that renovations works were ongoing.

The football club representatives present acknowledged that training did take place without booking with the Council. The clubs also agreed with the comments of the Operations Manager that training should never take place on match pitches and that they were aware this was the directive of the Football Association (The FA), with the outcome being that this may potentially affect grant funding from the FA.

In order that a full discussion took place, with the permission of the Chair, the representatives present participated in the discussion.

Members had heard earlier from the football club representatives who had asked that the implementation of training fees be delayed as training fees had not been factored into the club's fee charging structure for 2025.

In response to a Member's question regarding the impact to membership if training fees were enforced by the Council, the representative for Witney Vikings advised that with such demand for places he did not expect a drop in their membership due to a potential higher registration fee needing to be charged. However, he hoped that the collaboration with the Council to seek grant funding could mitigate the need for training fees.

Members discussed various options which resulted in a proposal to which all members unanimously agreed that:

1. Training sessions be allowed to proceed without charge this season and,
2. That all training must be booked via the bookings office to determine demand and so the correct maintenance can be carried out by the Council's work team and,
3. The Council identify and prepare other grassed areas, with a maximum 9 x 9 pitch being made available for training and,
4. That areas designated for training are used instead of match pitch areas (in line with FA guidance) and,
5. Absolutely no training must take place on match pitches outside of the football season (During renovation periods) and,
6. Storage containers be considered at the additional training sites identified and,
7. That the demand for training be monitored and its success reviewed in March 2026.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the above decisions, numbered 1-7, be communicated to the football teams at the upcoming new season meeting with clubs on 4 September 2025.

PR486 SPORTS PITCH UPDATE

Also, 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 and accompanying verbal update from the Operations Manager outlining the position of the sports pitches as the new football season approached.

Members heard that following a dry spring and summer the renovations had not been fully successful with areas of newly seeded ground not taking properly due to a lack of rain. The Operations Manager explained that the decompaction work had not taken place and in hindsight this was the correct decision as it would have led to create drying of the ground and creation of dangerous playing surface due to large cracks.

An update was provided on the grant funding that the Council was in receipt of, it was hoped that further funding may be sought from the Football Foundation to carry out further drainage consultations, specifically at West Witney. Members welcomed this having heard earlier from the representative of Witney Vikings that the club would look to support the Council in any grant applications.

The Operations Manager highlighted the potential risk of ground allocation for junior teams in so much as if one recreation ground was to suffer from poor weather, this would lead to the potential cancellation of all of that club's games and therefore adversely affect them. It was agreed that a trial allocation be discussed further with the football clubs at the meeting on 4 September.

The Committee discussed the request from Witney Vikings for the siting of a storage container at King George's field, Members were very supportive of this and highlighted the need to ensure that consideration also be given to storage for the Witney Wolves Basketball team who intended to make use of the court in the Multi Use Games Area.

Discussion regarding the request for additional inseting of pitches took place, it was proposed by Cllr R Smith, seconded by Cllr G Doughty that this should not be undertaken. Members heard this was the advice from the Football Association and was further supported by the news of damage witnessed from the overuse of the Burwell pitches in previous years.

A vote was taken with six members supporting the proposal, one member abstained.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, Officers discuss ground allocation with the junior football clubs and,
3. That, no marking of inset pitches take place and,
4. That, agreement install a storage container at King George's field be granted and consideration given to storage for Witney Wolves and,

5. That, potential grant funding opportunities is explored by Officers.

The representative of Witney Vikings left the meeting at 6:58pm.

The remaining members of the public left the meeting at 7:07pm

During the following Agenda Item Cllr D Edwards-Hughes left the meeting briefly between 7:10 and 7:12pm

PR487 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

Members heard that the net expenditure was at 22% of budget- it being three months into the financial year the news was welcomed.

Members considered items for inclusion in the 2026/27 budget, Members highlighted the potential need to set funds for improvements to the Basketball Court at King Georges Field, the path at West Witney to enhance the Park Run, Consideration for pitch drainage at any sites that require it and for consideration by Officers of an increase of benches in the Council's recreation areas.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, consideration be given to the suggested budget items listed above and,
3. That, the management accounts of the Parks & Recreation Committee for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025 be approved.

PR488 PLAY AREA REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer along with a verbal update explaining how the play review tied into the Council overall strategy. Councillors agreed that age and diversity along with the provision of seating and shade for parents should be prioritised by Officers when considering future improvements

The Committee were pleased to see the additions to the inclusive play range and particularly the play panels and welcomed the suggestion for Ralegh Crescent, to replace once of the current inclusive swing with a traditional swing. This would resolve the need to install a path and would allow for funds to be utilised instead provide an additional inclusive play item in an area with existing suitable access.

Officers explained further how consideration would be given to improve the access to inclusive equipment in all the Council's parks to ensure that their use is maximised, this would be carried out in conjunction with users and their families. Following a proposal from Cllr G Doughty, seconded by Cllr A Bailey it was agreed unanimously to delegate to Officers the installation of this equipment.

A paper with three options of replacement swing equipment for Burwell and The Leys play parks was tabled, members discussed each of the options. It was proposed by Cllr J Treloar, seconded by Cllr R Smith that Option One be selected as it provided a piece that could be used by up to four users at a time and could be used by children five and older.

The Committee welcomed the suggestion to install non-verbal communication boards in the play parks at Woodgreen, Oxlease and Quarry Road. These would be provided by Oxfordshire County Council Councillor priority funding and members were appreciative that Officers were carrying out this work alongside the ICE Centre.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, inclusive play equipment as detailed in the report should be purchased for the sum of £16,980 from the play areas budget and,
3. That, officers be authorised to procure and implement access/surfacing or a new inclusive swing at Raleigh Crescent Play Area as a high priority, within a maximum budget of £8,000, to be funded as a supplementary estimate from the General Reserve, the most expedient and cost-effective solution being sought, subject to RFO confirmation.
4. That, Option One (Agito Cyclone) be selected for the replacement swing at both Burwell Recreation Ground and The Leys for the sum of £19,240 from the play area budget.
5. That, prior to placing orders for the inclusive equipment listed in the report, the Project Officer engages with the residents who previously raised accessibility concerns and were promised involvement, to ensure suitability and siting within the available budget.
6. That, before procurement and installation of inclusive items, officers undertake proportionate access checks (edging, thresholds, approach surfacing and gate convenience) and minor enabling works to be authorised under existing delegation, with any material cost brought back to Committee.

PR489 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & 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.

PR490 PROJECTS UPDATE

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

Members were provided with updates on the West Witney Sports & Social Club building, the Raleigh Crescent new sports and social area and new works depot.

West Witney Projects.

Members heard that the Project Officer was confident that the tender document was progressing well and that it would be advertised in the following two weeks, they received an outline project timescale and were pleased to see that this showed that both projects would be completed by spring of 2026.

Raleigh Crescent

The Committee heard that the amended tender was due to be reviewed by WODC earlier the following week and, providing it was acceptable then it too would be advertised in the coming weeks.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal updates be noted.

PR491 **PROJECTS UPDATE - COURTSIDE/THE LEYS**

The Committee received the confidential update prepared by Jeff Hunter, Courtside CIC Chief Executive.

Members were extremely disappointed to learn of a potential funding gap for the project and how this may impact on the Council.

The Town Clerk reported that she had been in contact with West Oxfordshire District Council in order to request their consideration in helping to resolve the issue

A Members asked that the Chief Executive of Courtside be invited to the meeting of the Council on 6 October 2025 in order that Members heard directly from him.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential Courtside update be noted and,
2. That, Courtside Chief executive, Jeff Hunter be invited to the meeting of the Council on 6 October 2025.

The meeting closed at: 8.00 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 8 September 2025

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

Present:

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	J Robertshaw	G Doughty
	R Smith	D Temple
	O Collins	J Treloar
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
	Angus Whitburn	Operations Manager
Others:	None	

H492 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Bailey.

H493 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

H494 MINUTES

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 7 July 2025 were received.

H401 – Members were updated that the no cycling signage at St Mary's Church had been cleaned by the Town Council and Officers had forwarded a request to Oxfordshire County Council for review.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 7 July 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

H495 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

H496 LAKESIDE ALLOTMENTS FLOODING UPDATE

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 Operations Manager who also provided a verbal update.

Members were pleased to hear that following confirmation the owners of the ditch were the Town Council, that work had been carried out to clear it of vegetation and a plan had been put in place for its regular future maintenance.

Officers reported that details of the mapping of the area from Thames Water had yet to be received and were hopeful that an upcoming meeting with the Environment Agency would provide further information on their activity in the area around the allotments.

The Committee heard that the requested historical topographical survey had now been received, and they discussed the allocation of £2,500 to instruct a hydrologist to complete a flood survey. A Member raised that Oxfordshire County Council could potentially be approached to provide grant funding to cover the cost of the survey or potential works.

Members were unanimous in agreement that the survey proceed without delay in order to explore options at pace.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Officers instruct a hydrologist survey to be carried out up to a cost of £2,500 from the Allotments General Reserve.

The two members of the public left the meeting at 6:10pm

H497 NEW ASHES SECTION AT WINDRUSH CEMETERY

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager which was also raised up the agenda. The officer provided a detailed explanation of the options under consideration.

Members heard of the obstacles faced by both the operations team and visitors to the cemetery and how these would be addressed with the proposed new interment plots and installation of the pathway.

The Committee heard that although Options two and three required a larger outlay, these costs would be recouped by the sale of the Exclusive Rights of Burial to families in the future.

Members asked that the Friends of the Cemeteries be consulted and that a fully costed proposal be prepared by Officers for presentation at the meeting of the Committee on 10 November 2025 but that funds be provisionally included during the budget-setting discussions.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Friends of the Cemeteries be consulted on the options in the report and their thoughts gathered and,
3. That, a report be prepared by Officers with full financial costings and proposed charges outlined for consideration and,
4. That, £15,660 be allocated in the 2026/27 budget calculations in anticipation of the installation of 20 pre-installed ashes vaults (Option3).

The Operation Manager left the meeting at 6:30pm

H498 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

Members welcomed that the net expenditure for budget cost centres under the Committees remit stood at 18.4% for the 1st Quarter.

The RFO welcomed and answered questions that had been forwarded ahead of the meeting relating to the public halls' income and profit margins. Members heard that the Corn Exchange prioritised the use of local suppliers over those that provided the largest possible profit margin, it also worked with private hirers ahead of their events in order to promote the Corn Exchange services and enhance sales, however should the Council wish Officers to work to set margins then this could be considered and built into the ongoing Public Halls Business Plan.

A Member had also raised a question relating to the Councils registration for Value Added Tax (VAT), to which the RFO confirmed that the Council had been correctly registered since 1974.

In relation to the RFO's request for budget considerations it was felt by Members that focus should turn to the Burwell Hall which in their view lacked in facilities and overall presentation, it was considered that with some improvements it could be made more attractive for use by the football clubs at weekends as well as other potential private hirers. It was suggested that Officers survey users on their current needs and identify gaps in the Council current provision.

Later in the meeting two additional budget proposals arose, £15,660 for the new ashes section at Windrush Cemetery and £2,000 towards improvements to the hearing loop system in Corn Exchange.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted along with the responses to Members questions and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025 be approved.
3. That, consideration also be given to the inclusion in the budget for the improvements to the Corn Exchange hearing loop (£2,000) and for the new ashes section (£15,660).

The RFO left the meeting at 7:06pm

H499 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officers along with a verbal update from the Head of Estates & Operations.

Members discussed the options available to relaunch the seat sponsorship and were eager to proceed without delay, feeling that the launch ahead of Christmas would provide an opportunity to install the first plaques and therefore self-advertise the scheme to regular users.

Members raised questions regarding how the scheme would be run and asked that a full proposal be drafted by Officers for presentation at the next meeting of the Committee on 10 November 2025.

The Committee welcomed the idea of investigation to install a hearing loop in the Corn Exchange, though it was explained it was not a legal requirement it was strongly felt by Members that the Council provide this facility here and all other Halls.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, a report be prepared for the installation of a hearing loop for the next meeting of the committee and,
3. That, the sum of £2,000 be added to the budget requirements for 2026/27 to finance the installation of a hearing loop in the Corn Exchange.

H500 **CORN EXCHANGE BUSINESS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

Members were pleased to see the attendances and received a summary of the diverse range of events that had either taken place or were planned for the coming months, along with customer feedback from the 1863 Café.

They welcomed the new ideas of the Venue & Events team that continue to expand and promote the use of the Corn Exchange.

Resolved.

That, the report be noted.

The meeting closed at: 7.17 pm

Chair

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

Held on Tuesday, 9 September 2025

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

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	D Enright	R Smith
	A Mubin	J Treloar
	D Newcombe	J Doughty (In place of J Robertshaw)
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer &
		Committee Clerk
Others:	One member of the public.	

CB501 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Robertshaw, Councillor J Doughty attended as a substitute.

Councillor A Bailey submitted his apologies after the meeting had commenced, and as such, they could not be formally communicated during the meeting.

CB502 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

CB503 MINUTES

The minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

CB504 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from a resident of Kingfisher Meadows concerning Agenda Item 8

The Committee reconvened.

CB505 ROAD VERGE NATURE RESERVES AND CIRCULAR WALKING ROUTE FOR WITNEY

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

The Committee had heard how pleased the member of the public was with the current state of the verges in the Burford Road area and how they hoped these could be further maintained as road verge nature reserves.

Members were supportive of any activity that would assist the protection of the species identified in the residents brief to the Committee and welcomed the potential inclusion in the town biodiversity portfolio. It was noted that some of the verges highlighted were in a neighbouring parish however the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officers (B&GSO) explained the ownership structure of the verges and offered to make contact with Oxfordshire Country Council (OCC) to discuss changes or possible adoption into the Road verge nature reserves scheme.

Discussion turned to that of walking routes within the town. The residents expressed their keenness to be involved in developing a group of three walking routes with resilient signage options. A Member who was also a West Oxfordshire District Council suggested that collaboration with WODC could lead to cost savings as work was already under consideration.

Members were unanimously supportive of these ideas and asked that they be delegated to Officers to explore the options further.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, the B&GSO make contact with OCC to discuss the action to adopt the areas identified as a road verge nature reserve and,
3. That, Officers explore the options of walking routes in and around the town with a potential collaboration with WODC.

The Member of the Public left the meeting at 6:36pm.

CB506 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

No questions arose from Members.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee for the period 1 April to 30 June be approved.

CB507 ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the resident's annual satisfaction survey which was held at the beginning of the year.

Members were advised the report represented the survey results for the services under the remit of this committee and showed the combined satisfactory and above percentages against poor ones. Previous years data was also included to help benchmark the results. The report also contained all unedited comments on the services.

The Committee acknowledged that a huge portion of the work carried out by the Councils Team was long term however, they were encouraged to hear and see the improvements that are being made predominantly at the Lake & Country Park. These improvements included the changes to the level of the pathway around the lake that had led to improved access in time of flooding.

In response to comments raised in the survey regarding the appearance of the street scene, it was raised by a Member that the current scheme being run by West Oxfordshire District Council to improve commercial shop fronts also extended to planting idea and this could be something for the town businesses to explore.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

CB508 CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY MINUTES

Members received and considered the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party held on 22 July 2025.

Item 5 - Members were provided with an update on the progress of the Eco Fair which would take place on 9 October 2025. It was further explained that the event would primarily be an opportunity for partner organisations to promote their schemes to residents.

It was then proposed that a further event be held in the future on a weekend day to capture those residents that would not be able to attend a weekday event.

The next Climate Action Working Party meeting would be held on 25 September 2025 at 4pm, thus providing sufficient time for budget requirements to be presented to the meeting of the Council on 6th October.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party be approved and the recommendations therein be approved.

CB509 BIODIVERSITY UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer which provided an update on the recent surveys carried out in the Country park and the aims for its future development.

Members were also supportive of the plans to carry out the work to plant wildflowers on the Curbridge Roundabout, though this would involve the use of heavy machinery and additional working hours they were pleased to hear that no road closure or restrictions would be required.

Additionally, the Committee were pleased to hear of the continued collaboration with the Witney Shed to provide habitat boxes.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, a wildflower area be established at the Curbridge Roundabout.

CB510 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer along with a verbal update to explain how the Council may approach a reapplication for Green Flag status.

Members heard that Officers had recognised that the application required additional documentation to be completed prior to the submission and that the application should be submitted at a time that would see the onsite visit being carried out in March or April when the biodiversity would be at its best.

In response to Member's questions, the B&GSO confirmed that the Green Flag was an excellent status to hold as it could lead to more support, by way of grant funding, in order to reach the Councils leisure ambitions.

The Committee was unanimous in favour of supporting the reapplication providing that it did not create unnecessary time pressures on Officers.

Members also received details of the updated Management Plan for the Lake & Country Park as well as the In Bloom submission documentation. No questions arose and the Committee thanked the Council team for their work in providing the updates.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Officers resubmit an application for Green Flag status and,
3. That, the updated management plan be approved.

CB511 CARBON FOOTPRINT REPORT - WITNEY CIVIL PARISH

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer which outlined details of the Carbon Footprint Audit for the Parish.

Members heard how the report would be used to continually track the changes made and hopefully track any improvements made. They also heard that the parish currently compared well against other similar sized towns both locally and across Great Britain.

The C&EO outlined the changes targets and suggested that these be discussed at greater length at the Climate Action Working Party meetings.

Members were encouraged to fully evaluate the contents of the report in order to prepare for future discussions.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers undertake an analysis of the Parish Carbon footprint and prepare a schedule of actions and recommendations for consideration.

*Cllr A Mubin left the meeting at 7:18pm.
Rejoining part way through the following item at 7:25pm.*

CB512 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer relating to the first draft of the Climate Change strategy and action plan.

Members again received a comprehensive document that they were encouraged to review fully so that they may feedback at the meeting of the Climate Working Action party to be held on 25 September 2025. They heard that it tied in with the larger overall Council Strategic Plan. Officers would be working collaboratively to ensure there would be a clear understanding across the Council in order that progress was smooth and effective.

The C&EO updated the Committee on the progress of the Carbon Audit of the Councils buildings; there had been a delay due to the reports being produced with the assistance of university students which given the time of year had been on their summer recess.

The initial focus would be on Burwell Hall as this was owned by the Council outright and did not have any listed status therefore any actions could be actioned without undue delay. Any recommendations would be communicated to the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee for their budget approval.

Members also heard of the introduction of Key Performance Indicators to the Action Plan in order that the Committee along with the Climate Action Working Party could have input in setting expected delivery targets on each of the aims.

The Committee congratulated and thanked the C&EO on the process made in the short time that she had been in post and warmly welcomed seeing how the plans progressed.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, that the first draft of the Action plan be noted and,
3. That, Members provide feedback on the plan and KPI's to the meeting of the CAWP on 25 September.

The Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer left the meeting at 7:30pm

CB513 WEST WITNEY PROJECTS - ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer which provides details of the energy efficient elements of the West Witney Projects which would commence later in the year.

Members heard that the report had been complied with information gathered from the Project Officer in response to a request from the Climate Action Working Party at their meeting of 22 July 2025.

Members raised questions regarding to the use of solar energy and if this would be used year-round. They also asked why a heat exchanger had been scoped out of the proposals. It was agreed that these questions be passed to the Project Officer for response.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the questions raised be passed to the Project Officer for response to the Committee.

CB514 POWER FOR PEOPLE - COMMUNITY ENERGY

The Committee received the correspondence from the Power for the People campaign.

Members acknowledged that this formed part of the Terms of Reference for the Committee to support “To explore and promote the expansion of community energy” and therefore welcomed being kept updated as the scheme progresses.

Members heard that West Oxfordshire District Council was also currently looking at this and similar schemes.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

The meeting closed at: 7.45 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 15 September 2025

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

Present:

Councillor T Ashby (Chair)

Councillors:	R Smith	J Treloar
	G Meadows	D Temple (In place of D Edwards- Hughes)
	D Enright	R Crouch (In place of A Bailey)
	A Mubin	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Annie Hathaway	Business Administration Apprentice
Others:	Six members of the public.	

SC515 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Edwards Hughes and A Bailey, Councillors D Temple and R Crouch attended respectively as substitutes.

SC516 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T Ashby declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 7 due to his connection with Witney Buttercross Scouts.

Councillor R Smith declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8 owing to the connection with the provider of the detached Youth Services provision through the church she attended.

Councillor J Treloar declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 14 due to his relationship with the individuals that organised the Witney Music Festival.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

SC517 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 14 July 2025 were received.

SC415 – A correction was requested to clarify that the market had not been sold but rather a new operator had been appointed to run the market.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 14 July 2025 approved as a correct record of the meeting, subject to the above amendment, and be signed by the Chair.

During the following item Cllr A Mubin arrived at 6:05pm.

SC518 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The Committee received representations from a Director of West Oxfordshire Community Transport concerning Agenda Item 12 along with further representation from the Chair of Witney Chamber of Commerce concerning Agenda Item 11, The Station regarding Agenda Item 8 and Witney Music Festival on Agenda Item 14.

Members welcomed the varied participation and looked forward to discussing each item as they arose later in the meeting.

The Committee reconvened.

SC519 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the Committee.

The Town Clerk noted that the Council would be considering its budget during the next cycle of meetings, and that the RFO's report had requested Members to suggest any inclusions for the 2026/27 budget. She further advised that items later on the agenda might give rise to budgetary implications.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Stronger Communities Committee for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025 be approved.

SC520 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer.

Members agreed that the Communication Survey should be rerun in order to establish which means of communication were most appropriate for residents. It was further agreed that this be included as part of the next resident's annual survey as this was delivered to all Witney properties.

Regarding the production of an additional resident newsletter Members had varied opinions on whether this should be financed by the inclusion of paid advertising from businesses. There were concerns that the news content of the newsletter would not reach its intended audience as it would potentially be seen as a piece of additional junk mail, there were also concerns regarding staff time in organising the advertisements.

It was proposed by Cllr D Enright that instead of a newsletter, a calendar of town events be considered. The Chair asked that Officers report back on the feasibility of this to the next meeting of the Committee, along with the consideration of an external company carrying out the design and advertisement procurement work.

A Member asked that inclusion of paid advertising be considered for the existing printed spring newsletter so as to reduce the overall cost to the Council of its production and distribution.

The Committee considered the erection of an information sign for the COVID Memorial following persistent Anti-Social Behaviour over the summer. Members were in agreement of a budget of £100 being set.

Recommended:

1. That the report be noted and,
2. That, the Communication Survey be rerun in the next resident satisfaction survey and,
3. That Officers report back to the Committee on the publication of an events calendar utilising an external company for its production and,
4. That consideration be given to the inclusion of paid advertising in its existing printed newsletter in order to reduce costs,
5. That, a sign be installed at the COVID memorial utilising a budget of £100.

SC521 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer (C&CEO).

Members were pleased to hear updates on the variety of subjects included in the Officers report and were in agreement with the proposals to support and promote the Orange the World, International Men's Day, World Mental Health Day, International Car Free Day, SSE Priority Service Register, Christmas competitions, Citizen of the Year awards and walks by the Witney Museum for Remembrance Sunday.

The Committee also discussed ideas for the celebration of British values and national pride, including ideas to mark St George's Day, with events such as a Tea Party, Civic Service at St Marys Church and a Last Night at the Proms styled event at the Corn Exchange; additionally, Members were keen that local businesses should be involved. It was agreed that a Working Party would be created with a membership of four or five Councillors along with the inclusion of non-councillor members being agreed at the next meeting of the Council. The Working Party could then explore ideas further.

Members discussed the proposed flag flying arrangements which would see the Town flag flown daily and additional flags on specific special occasions, such as the marking of anniversaries of the Battle of Britain and the United Nations which were discussed and agreed upon. Officers were requested to draft a Policy document for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

Members were supportive of the request from Thames Valley Police to hold a "Have a go" event on The Leys, they hoped this would go towards addressing the increase in Anti-Social Behaviour witnessed around the town, particularly over the summer months. It was agreed that the subject

be discussed further at the meeting of the Council on 6 October where a representative of TVP would hopefully be in attendance.

The Town Clerk asked the Committee to consider the extension of an invitation to RAF Brize Norton to exercise their Freedom of the Town on what would be the 50th anniversary on its granting on 24 September 2027. Although there were concerns raised as to the presence of weapons in the town at such an event, all Members were in agreement.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, a Working Party be created to explore ideas celebrating Britishness and national pride and,
3. That, Nominations of up to five councillors to join the Working Party be taken at the meeting of the Council on 6 October 2025 and,
4. That, the anniversary of the Battle of Britain be added to the Council flag flying calendar and,
5. That, Officers draft an updated flag flying policy for consideration at the meeting of the Committee on 17 November and for it to be widely advertised upon adoption and,
6. That, the Council support the request for a guided walk at Tower Hill Cemetery on Remembrance Day and,
7. That, the Council provide support to the “Orange the World” campaign with social media posts and lighting of the Corn Exchange on 25 November and,
8. That, the SSE priority service be promoted both via social media outlets and the users of café 1863 and,
9. That, the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations on 24th October be marked by a flag flying and coffee morning with all costs being met by the Mayor’s civic allowance and,
10. That, the Council support Thames Valley Police’s “have a go” event with free use of The Leys and,
11. That, the updated Community Window Policy be recommended for approval and,
12. That, RAF Brize Norton be invited to mark its 50th Anniversary of the Freedom of Witney in 2027.

SC522 WITNEY FORUM MEETING NOTES

The Committee Clerk apologised for the inclusion of the Witney Forum notes as these had been presented and noted at the meeting of this Committee on 21 July 2025.

*During the following Agenda Item.
Cllr J Treloar left the meeting briefly between 7:25 and 7:28pm
A Member of the public joined the meeting at 7:30pm*

SC523 YOUTH SERVICES

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk along with the earlier participation from the representative of The Station.

Members acknowledged the updates provided on the Youth Services grant allocations and welcomed the way in which the grant allocations had been dealt with.

The Committee welcomed the update provided in the report as well as the participation of The Station’s representative outlining their proposals for future funding. Members were in

agreement that the use of the 1863 café be granted for evening half-term youth cafés in October and February with The Station covering the cost of a bar staff member and purchasing drinks at cost price. Regarding the future funding of The Station the Chair suggested that this item be considered at the end of the agenda in closed session.

Members were disappointed not to receive a report from APCAM providing feedback on the Mental Health Drop in & We Game sessions however, they hoped that this would be forthcoming ahead of their consideration of the 2026-27 budget.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, the updates regarding the youth services grant awards be noted and,
3. That, The Station be granted use of Café 1863 to run evening youth café on the terms agreed previously.

SC524 YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATE

The Committee received the report of the Communications & Engagement Administrative Assistant regarding the recent activity of the Youth Council.

Members were informed of two new additions to the Youth Council, along with two further potential members. It was hoped that, with the continued support and guidance of Officers, Youth Councillor mentors, and possible collaboration with existing local school Councils, progress could be made towards achieving some of the Youth Council's objectives.

Members were in agreement with the use of WhatsApp to aid communication within the Youth Council and for the creation of a newsletter to be issued to local schools, it was suggested that the Kings School and Cokethorpe School were included in the distribution.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, WhatsApp be approved as a form of communication and,
3. That, a monthly slide newsletter be created and issued to local schools.

Clr A Mubin left the meeting at 7:34pm

SC525 CHRISTMAS TREE AND EVENT SPONSORSHIP

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer which covered the upcoming Christmas activity for 2025.

Members discussed the options for the distribution of the Social Value Fund, provided via the Christmas Lights contract and agreed the charities supported in 2024 should once again be the recipients as they offered support to a broad scope across the town. These were; Witney Foodbank, Witney Food Revolution, Witney Community Church and High Street Methodist Church and they should each be awarded £250 from the fund.

The Committee also welcomed the proposal to raise sponsorship for both the Christmas Trees and the Advent Fayre Event. It was felt this would enhance local business relations as well as provide budget relief for the Council.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and
2. That, Officers advise LITE of the beneficiaries of the Christmas lights social value fund and
3. That, the Christmas lights sponsorship scheme be approved.

Cllr A Mubin rejoined the meeting at 7:40pm

SC526 WITNEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk along with the earlier participation from the Chair of the Witney Chamber of Commerce.

Members discussed the reformation of the Witney Town Centre Forum as they felt it important to work with West Oxfordshire District Council, Cotswold Markets, and local businesses. It was also felt that the Town Partnership organisation which had been led by WODC Officers should be involved so that any information and ideas gathered by them could be incorporated.

The Committee were pleased to support this initiative and lead as an organisation so as to take a strong role in progressing the formation of the Forum which they hoped would be supported by the Witney Chamber of Commerce.

Members agreed that the Town Council should have three positions on the Forum and that nominations of these should take place at the meeting of the Council on 6 October 2025.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, establishment of a Town Centre Forum be approved with Witney Town Council carrying out administration of the Forum.
3. That, nominations of the three Councillors to join the Forum be taken at the meeting of the Council on 6 October 2025.

Cllr D Enright left the meeting at 7:45pm

SC527 WEST OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

The Committee received the request from West Oxfordshire Community Transport along with representation from a Director of WOCT earlier in the meeting. The request was for an increase to the annual grant awarded by the Council.

Members were advised of a correction to the amount being requested. The letter had stated an increase from £21,000 to £26,000, however the current level of grant was £23,500 and therefore an increase of only £2,500 was requested.

Several members spoke passionately about the essential service that WOCT provided and their concerns if the additional funding was not provided, it was highlighted that many residents, particularly the elderly relied on the services of WOCT to complete their daily activities.

The Town Clerk advised that funds could be found to support the request from other unspent budget lines with an example of the Water safety budget being given. She also suggested that the timing of the grant was an important factor, specifically whether it applied for the Council's full financial year or was pro-rated over a shorter period, in which case the actual amount awarded this financial year would be less than £2,500.

The Chair spoke of his concerns at the awarding of the grant and proposed that no award be made and that he writes to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) asking that they fund the gap that existed. The proposal was seconded by Cllr J Treloar.

An alternative proposal to award the additional grant of £2,500 was proposed by Cllr R Smith, seconded by Cllr R Crouch.

A vote was taken for Members to agree to one of the two proposals, a request from Cllr G Meadows asked that the names of those voting be taken. The result of the vote was:

- No additional grant award – For: Cllrs A Mubin, J Treloar, D Temple and T Ashby.
- An award of £2,500 – For: Cllrs R Smith, G Meadows and R Crouch.

It was therefore agreed that no award be made and that the Chair write to OCC to request their intervention to consider funding the gap in WOCT's needs.

Recommended:

1. That, the request from WOCT be noted and,
2. That, the additional grant award be not agreed and the annual grant remain at £23,500 and,
3. That, the Chair writes to OCC requesting their consideration of additional financial support to WOCT.

SC528 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO 5(W)

Resolved

That, Standing Order 5(w) be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue as it had now lasted for two hours.

SC529 WINTER PREPARATIONS

The Committee received and considered the proposed sites for additional grit bins.

The proposed sites for three bins to be installed along Centenary Way on the new Windrush Place Estate had been provisionally discussed with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Winter Services team, however as the roads were yet to be formally adopted Officers had been informed these could not be considered further.

Members agreed that Officers should reapproach OCC to establish if procurement of the same style bins was made by the Town Council, with the approval of the Windrush Place consortium landowner, would the grit bins be adopted along with the road infrastructure at a later date.

Members heard that the proposed site at Springfield Oval that had been approved at the meeting of the Committee on 14 July 2025 would shortly be installed.

Resolved:

That, Officers liaise with OCC regarding the installation of the proposed Grit Bins at Windrush Place Estate.

SC530 **THIRD PARTY EVENTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer which provided details of the past and upcoming events held on the Council's land.

Members heard that the subsidised lettings budget had been oversubscribed in 2025/26, and that requests for 2026/27 were expected to rise further, partly due to the additional use granted to users of The Leys. The Committee were broadly supportive of increasing the subsidised lettings budget, noting that costs would rise in any case in line with the annual hire rate percentage increase.

With regard to the Council's contribution to Witney Carnival, the Town Clerk advised that the Carnival Committee should submit funding applications in good time to align with the Council's budget cycle. This would ensure anticipated requests could be included in the budget, rather than received mid-year and risking an overspend.

The Committee Clerk advised that Officers had met with the organisers of Witney Music Festival earlier in the day and that they had given an understanding of the level of feedback required from Witney Music Festival in order to provide the Council with the confidence required to support the ongoing partnership. It was agreed that on receipt of the information from WMF that Officers prepare a report on the grant award for consideration by the Committee on 17 November 2025.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, the subsidised lettings budget be increased in 2026-27 to reflect the additional expenditure plus the annual percentage inflationary increase and,
3. That, an increase in the Town Council's contribution to Witney Carnival for 2026/27 be not agreed at this stage, but the Carnival Committee be encouraged to submit its funding request in good time for consideration as part of the Council's budget-setting cycle. and,
4. That, Witney Music Festival be asked to provide comprehensive feedback on the 2025 event and Officers prepare a full report for consideration of the grant award for the 2026 Witney Music Festival.

Three Members of the Public left at 8:08pm

SC531 **THE STATION - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT AND FUNDING FOR 2026/27**

At the discretion of the Chair the consideration of the budget request did not take place under Agenda Item 8 and was discussed independently.

The Committee heard that the request was to increase the current funding by £10,400 from £18,000 to £28,400 which was broadly similar to the original award of £27,000 made to them for the 2024/25 financial year. The Station had evolved over the previous 18 months and now looked to develop a programme of changes to support the young people of Witney.

Members were conscious that the Service Level Agreement between The Station and the Council should reflect a detached youth service and allow for the Council to provide direction and guidance when highlighting problem areas.

The Committee unanimously agreed that the requested grant of £28,400 be included in the budget setting calculations however, this would be subject to a newly established Service Level Agreement being drawn up, the drafting of which was delegated to the Chair, Leader, Cllr R Crouch and Deputy Town Clerk.

Recommended:

1. That, the request for funding be noted and,
2. That, £28,400 be considered for budget purposes for the provision of a detached youth service in 2026-27 and,
3. That, it be delegated to the Chair, Leader, Cllr R Crouch and Deputy Town Clerk to draw up an updated Service Level Agreement.

The meeting closed at: 8.22 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 22 September 2025

At 6.02 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	R Crouch	G Doughty
	A Bailey	S Simpson
	J Doughty	G Meadows (In place of J Aitman)
	T Ashby	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer &
		Committee Clerk
Others:	None	

F540 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr J Aitman with Cllr G Meadows attending as a substitute.

F541 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr J & Cllr G Doughty declared personal, non-pecuniary interests in agenda item 22 as a resident at a property referred to in the report was known to them.

Later in the meeting, Cllr R Crouch declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 22, noting that she was a member of the tennis club mentioned in the report.

F542 MINUTES

The minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 21 July 2025 were received.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 21 July 2025 be approved as correct records of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

F543 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

F544 **SUBSIDISED LETTING POLICY REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered a draft policy for the allocation of subsidised letting grants by the Council.

Members welcomed the policy, which had been requested at the previous meeting in response to the oversubscription of this year's budget. The policy would help prioritise funding requests and provide the Committee with greater flexibility to allocate funds based on community benefit. It was agreed that a point should be added to ensure funding approvals took place at the bi-annual meetings with a percentage of budget limits, helping to preserve funds for the latter part of the year.

It was also noted that hall hire costs had risen in line with inflation in recent years, while the budget allocated for this financial support had remained unchanged.

Resolved:

That, the Subsidised Letting Policy, subject to the above amendment with wording delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk, be approved and reviewed after one year.

F545 **LOST PROPERTY POLICY**

The Committee received and considered a draft policy for the management of lost property by the Council.

Members welcomed the comprehensive policy which clearly outlined expectations to anyone who lost property on Council premises.

Resolved:

That, the Lost Property Policy, as presented, be approved by Witney Town Council and reviewed after one year.

F546 **OPEN WATER POLICY**

The Committee received and considered a draft Open Water Policy for the Council.

Members welcomed the introduction of this policy, recognising its importance given the Council's responsibilities regarding open water facilities. The policy clearly outlined permitted activities, associated risks, and the mitigation measures in place within the Council's parks.

Resolved:

That, the Open Water Policy, as presented, be approved by Witney Town Council and reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation or operational needs changed.

F547 COMMUNITY WINDOW POLICY

The Committee received and considered a policy for the community window of the Council's reception/administration office.

The policy had been recommended for approval by the Stronger Communities Committee at its meeting on 15 September, the annual review incorporating health and safety measures.

Resolved:

That, the Community Window Policy, as presented, be approved for Witney Town Council.

F548 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

The Committee received and considered a Mental Health and Wellbeing policy for employees.

The policy had been recommended for approval by the Personnel Sub-Committee at its meeting on 10 September.

Resolved:

That, the Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy, as presented, be approved and reviewed every two years, or sooner if required by legislation or operational change.

F549 CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING POLICY

The Committee received and considered a Corporate Volunteering policy for employees.

The policy had been recommended for approval by the Personnel Sub-Committee at its meeting on 10 September.

Members welcomed the policy but agreed that the title could be revised to either "Charitable Volunteering" or "Employee Volunteering" to provide greater clarity. Questions were also raised regarding time off for other types of service, whilst the Town Clerk agreed to investigate the examples further she did advise that she was sure these would be set out in the 'Green Book' the National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services.

Resolved:

1. That, the Corporate Volunteering Policy, subject to the name change noted above, be approved for Witney Town Council and,
2. That, the Town Clerk/C.E.O refers back to the Personnel Sub Committee on points raised regarding other periods of time off.

F550 LONG SERVICE AWARD POLICY

The Committee received and considered a policy for the recognition of long service of employees.

The policy had been recommended for approval by the Personnel Sub-Committee at its meeting on 10 September to ensure fair and consistent recognition to staff members.

Members welcomed the policy and agreed that, under point 5, long service awards should be presented at the most appropriate and timely Council meeting. However, it was also agreed that all recognitions within the year should be celebrated at the Council's annual Civic Reception.

Resolved:

That, the Long Service Awards Policy, subject to the above amendment, be approved and reviewed every three years, or sooner if legislative or operational needs required it.

F551 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

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

Officers noted the continued and growing use of electronic payments for June and July 2025.

Resolved:

That, the report, bank statements and reconciliations be noted, and the following schedule of payments be approved:

Payment reference	In the sum of:	Account
DDs, ELPs 97-123 (electronic payments) and Standing Orders June 2025	£185,901.47	General CB 1
Cheques 100060 and 35180-35181; DDs, BACs and Standing Orders June 2025	£9,650.85	Imprest CB 2
DDs, ELPs 124-140 and Standing Orders July 2025	£188,256.59	General CB 1
Cheque 35182, DDs and Standing Orders July 2025	£8,975.65	Imprest CB 2

F552 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2025

The Committee received a verbal update on the Internal Audit report which had been agreed and submitted by the Council as part of its Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Members noted a non-material error in the report which had the date of the first internal audit visit as 16 October 2025, when in fact it had been 2024. The error had been reported to the external auditor.

Officers advised the conclusion of the external audit had been received and a report would be prepared by the RFO for the Full Council meeting on 6 October 2025.

Resolved:

That, the non-material error in the Internal Audit report 2025 be noted.

F553 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2026 - ASSERTION 10

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which highlighted changes to the Annual Governance Statement for 2026.

Members were informed that updates to the Practitioners Guide, issued by the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel, had introduced a new assertion 10 in the annual statements, requiring the Council to determine whether it met the relevant digital compliance standards.

Although this assertion applied to the 2026 statement, the requirements took effect immediately. It was noted that the Council was already compliant in the necessary areas.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

F554 APPROVAL OF LOAN

The Committee received notice of borrowing approval from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

The RFO advised that this was a formal document enabling the Council to apply for a loan to support the West Witney project. Following its approval, tender documents had been published, with contracts expected to be awarded in November. This was likely to necessitate an Extraordinary Council meeting.

Members welcomed the information and were pleased the project had progressed to this stage. The final loan amount would be known on receipt of the tenders.

Resolved:

That, the approval of borrowing (for a loan) from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government be noted.

During the following Agenda Item Cllr A Bailey left the meeting at 6:50pm rejoining at 6:55pm

F555 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee and investments of the Council.

There were several questions from Members, including local government accounting practices, reinvestment of investment growth, the Councils overall financial holdings and the practice of the retention of existing budget lines into the following years budget.

The Committee was also invited to note information about a subscription to Breakthrough Communications, providing additional support with data governance and communications.

Members agreed that the service offered good value for money and would strengthen the Council's governance.

Finally, the Committee was informed that officers would be reviewing the budgets for the 2026-27 financial year and were asked to submit any capital or special revenue projects not previously raised at this time.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Committee for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025 be approved and,
3. That, a subscription to Breakthrough Communications Council Hive service for the sum of £1,200 in the new financial year be approved and funded from existing budgets and,
4. That, the investment statement for July 2025 be noted and,
5. That, the subsidised lettings budget for 2026-27 be increased from £1,800 to £2,000 to help meet higher hall hire increases from previous years.

F556 BUDGET PARAMETERS 2026-27

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO in relation to budget-setting for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

Members were advised it was good practice for the Council to formally agree the parameters within which the budget for 2026/27 would be prepared. The RFO had outlined the current position with suggested prudent estimated increases for inflation, staffing costs, utilities, insurance, and other expenditure lines, and sought the Committees endorsement, to enable him to work to these parameters when producing the draft budgets.

The RFO also provided information on consulting residents about the 2026-27 budget and how this could be accomplished within the limited timeframe for finalising the budget calculations. Members agreed that while a consultation would demonstrate transparency, it would only be valuable if the feedback could impact the final decision.

It was concluded that the consultation should consist of a small number of straightforward questions focused on prioritising key services, and that consideration be given to collecting postcode and age data to enhance the results analysis.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the budget parameters contained in the report be approved and,
3. That, consultation on the budget takes place, based on the prioritisation of services, with these delegated to officers to finalise.

F557 FINANCIAL MATTERS REFERRED FROM SPENDING COMMITTEES

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning financial expenditure from spending committees.

By way of an update, officers advised that the potential cost of a newly made Witney town flag was likely to be between £200-400 based on initial quotes.

The Chair explained that, as a matter of historic practice, only approved expenditure was typically reported under this item, not requests that had been declined. However, given the community need reflected in the West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT) new year grant application, the Chair of the Stronger Communities Committee was asked whether there had been any indication that Oxfordshire County Council might support the additional £2,500 required for the services. He responded that he would follow this up with the County Council. The Chair added that the item should be revisited to ensure the funding gap is addressed in some way.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the recommendations of the spending Committees as detailed be approved and,
3. That, the potential cost of a new town flag be noted and,
4. That, the decision not to provide further annual funding to WOCT remain under review.

F558 GRANTS & SUBSIDISED LETTINGS

The Committee received the joint report of the RFO and Deputy Town Clerk concerning grant activity to local organisations.

Members were informed that there had been two grant applications and one late subsidised letting request. They agreed to refuse the latter, as the budget for the year had already been fully allocated.

The Committee acknowledged the benefits of a grant for an e-bike to support community policing, especially given the incidents of antisocial behaviour over the summer but noted vehicles should form part of general policing operations. Approving the grant would assist in fulfilling the Council's obligations to prevent crime and disorder; however, it would also reduce funds available for other purposes. Therefore, it was agreed to approve a reduced amount of £1,000.

Regarding the contribution for the Christmas Lights switch-on event, Members noted that the requested amount exceeded previous years and was above the approved budget. Due to the difficulty of justifying and allocating additional funds mid-financial year, a reduced amount of £2,500 was approved.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Thames Valley Police Witney neighbourhood policing team be awarded a grant of £1,000 towards an e-bike for Witney and,
3. That, the Rotary Club of Witney be awarded a grant of £2,500 towards the 2025 Christmas Lights switch-on event and,
4. That, the Deputy Town Clerk write to the Rotary Club explaining the situation, asking for estimated costs for 2026-27 and,
5. That, these grants be awarded under the General Power of Competence and awardees be asked to acknowledge the Town Council in any promotional material and,
6. That, a late request for one day's subsidised letting by Circus Ginnett be declined and,
7. That, the updates regarding the Youth Services Grant be noted and,
8. That, the correspondence from Be Free Young Carers and Ducklington Sports Club be welcomed and noted.

A Member of the public joined the meeting at 7:58pm

F559 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 5(W)**

Resolved:

That, Standing Order 5(w) be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue as it had now lasted for two hours.

F560 **BROADCASTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Committee Clerk concerning the future live broadcasting of meetings.

This report had been referred from the previous meeting and confirmed the Council's technological capability for this purpose and proposed a start date as 13 January 2026.

Members confirmed their desire for residents to be able to observe the democratic process in January. They agreed that no additional procedures were necessary, as Councillors were already bound by the adopted Code of Conduct and meetings were expected to be managed appropriately by their Chairs.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the live broadcasting of Council meetings begins on 13 January 2026 and be reviewed after six months.

F561 **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.

The Member of the public left the meeting at 8:10pm

F562 **STRATEGIC PROPERTY, LEGAL & INSURANCE MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O.

Members were provided with updates on a range of property and lease matters, including the Leys Hub Development, West Witney Tennis Courts, and the Clubhouse.

In relation to the Leys, members noted the Heads of Terms prepared by Officers in consultation with the Council's professional property advisors, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Discussion took place on the proposed level of rent, and the Town Clerk was instructed to negotiate this further with the tenants. An update was also given on the infrastructure supporting the tennis courts at West Witney Sports Ground, and it was agreed that the tenants should submit an invoice for the costs incurred in carrying out repairs.

Prior to Officers drafting Heads of Terms for the eventual lease of the clubhouse at West Witney Sports Ground, the Committee were being asked to consider the responsibility and future management of the sports changing rooms, given that these facilities were to have separate access from the social club. Members emphasised that all sports ground users must be able to access them in the future regardless of membership to the sports and social club, and that this requirement should be clearly reflected in any lease.

Estate matters were also discussed, with members agreeing that an external review of the Council's grounds maintenance should be undertaken as good practice, following three years of in-house operation. In addition, a decision was taken regarding how the Council should proceed with an issue concerning amenity land at Thorney Leys.

Resolved:

1. That the confidential report be noted;
2. That the Council's legal position on the Leys Hub Development be noted, and that Bidwells be instructed to progress the terms of the lease and rent level as set out in the Heads of Terms and as discussed;
3. That Witney Lawn Tennis Club submit an invoice for the fencing repairs; and
4. That use of the changing room and toilet facilities at West Witney be protected for the benefit of all sports users.
5. That, the Council commissions an external, independent audit of its in-house grounds maintenance service and,
6. That, the issue surrounding amenity land at Thorney Leys be referred to West Oxfordshire District Council.

F563 HR & HEALTH & SAFETY SUPPORT

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O regarding human resources and health & safety advice for the Council.

Members welcomed the report and agreed a contract should be taken out with the company outlined in the report for human resources and health & safety add-ons as it was hoped it would reduce the Council's overall costs.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential report be noted and,
2. That, the Council commits to a contract with CIPD HR-Inform Pro as outlined in the report.

F564 MINUTES - PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE 10 SEPTEMBER 2025

The Committee received the minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee meeting held on 10 September 2025.

Resolved:

That, the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 10 September 2025, and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

The meeting closed at: 9.08 pm

Chair

FULL COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year ended 31 March 2025 – external audit report and certificate and notice of conclusion of audit
Meeting Date:	Monday 6 October 2025
Contact Officer:	Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

Background

The Council's accounts are prepared in accordance with proper practices set out in statute, including the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, and detailed further in the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) 2024 edition of the Practitioners' Guide, published by the National Association of Local Councils.

In accordance with Section 6 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, Witney Town Council is defined as a 'smaller authority' because the higher of the authority's gross income for the year and its gross expenditure for the year does not exceed £6,500,000. The Council may also be referred to, for the purposes of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, as a "Category 2 authority."

As a result the Council has to approve an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) each year. The AGAR for year ending 31 March 2025 was approved by the Council at its meeting of 23 June 2025.

The AGAR is subject to external audit on the basis of a limited assurance review, as required by law. The external audit report and certificate for 2024/25 has now been received together with a letter to the Town Clerk drawing attention to a number of other matters considered during the audit. This report considers these two documents.

The Council advertised the Notice of Conclusion of Annual Audit on 26 September 2025.

Current Situation

External Auditor Report and Certificate 2024/25

The External Auditor Report and Certificate 2024/25 from Moore, dated 12 September 2025 is attached.

- (a) There is one matter detailed in the report where the auditor raises a concern that relevant legislation and regularity matters have not been met. This relates to Section 1,

Assertion 4 of the AGAR regarding advertising of notice of public rights during 2024/25. Members will recall that the Council advertised a period of public rights amounting to 31 days rather than the statutory 30 days.

Members considered this carefully when completing the AGAR and felt that this extra day was not material and that as the Council was giving a longer period for the public to exercise their rights they would answer "Yes" to this question. The audit opinion is that the Council should have answered "No."

(b) There are three other matters in the report which are classified as "Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority." These are detailed in the report. The first one is a difference in the Accounting Statements (Section 2) of £1 on boxes 1 and 7 between the audited 2023-24 statement and the prior year column in the 2024-25 statement. As the auditor states "we consider these amendments to be trivial and no significant concerns arise." This was caused by a rounding difference in the financial software.

The two other items relate (i) to an error on a working paper submitted to the auditor, reconciling boxes 7 and 8 on the Accounting Statements. This was corrected and resubmitted by the RFO and did not affect the Accounting Statements. (ii) A clerical error by the Internal Auditor in his report stating the date an audit visit as being 16/10/2025 when it was in fact 16/10/2024. This was resubmitted.

All of these matters are noted and the RFO will seek to avoid recurrence.

Letter from Moore to Town Clerk/ Chief Executive dated 17 September 2025

This is a letter from the auditor detailing matters to the Clerk which are not included in the auditor's certificate and opinion which they wish to draw attention to. These are:

(a) That general reserves appear to be held at a low level, that the Council should keep this under review and ensure they have sufficient general reserves to cover expenditure. The RFO does not consider that general reserves are held at a low level.

The Practitioners' Guide referred to in the letter states:

"5.34. The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure.

5.35. The reason for the wide range is to cater for the large variation in activity level between individual authorities. The smaller the authority, the closer the figure may be to 12 months expenditure, the larger the authority, the nearer to 3 months. In practice, any authority with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should plan towards 3 months equivalent general reserve."

The Council's net revenue expenditure for 2024-25 was £1,722,240 and so three months' expenditure is £430,560; the general reserve at 31 March 2025 was £473,387 which is just over three months' net revenue expenditure. It should also be noted that the Council has significant

earmarked reserves (£2,195,526 as at 31 March 2025) which are classified as revenue and could be redesignated at any time.

The Council will as usual consider its reserves position as part of the budget process but the RFO reiterates at this stage his opinion that the general reserves are held at an appropriate level for an authority of this size.

- (b) Referencing of minute numbers in the AGAR. Sections 1 and 2 must be approved separately but the same minute references were used for each section.

In response it is correct that both sections were referenced as approved under minute 366 as so this would appear to be the case.

However minute 366 of the council meeting on 23 June 2025 is has a number of parts to it:

1. *That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,*
2. *That, the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2025 be approved, and formally adopted by the Council and,*
3. *That, the Statement of Accounts at Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2025 be approved, and formally adopted by the Council and,*
4. *That, in light of the above the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2024/25 be formally agreed and adopted by the Council.*

Consequently the auditor's comment that "this was not clear on the face of the return."

The Council did though approve the AGAR correctly and so in future the minute references will be quoted to include the sub-reference, which in this case would have been minute 366(2) and minute 366 (3).

- (c) This next point refers to the approval of the bank reconciliation statements. These have for many years been presented to and approved by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee with the Internal Auditor also checking through a sample each year.

This matter has been reviewed by your officers and in future bank reconciliations prepared by the RFO will be checked and signed each month by the Town Clerk to provide additional assurance to Members.

- (d) The auditor has pointed out that at year end the Barclays imprest account would have been overdrawn if all outstanding cheques were presented. As presumed at the top of page 2 of the letter there is an automatic sweep of the account each day, with funds being transferred from the Business Premium Account to ensure the account is never overdrawn and therefore no further action is required.

- (e) The final point relates to "information drawn to our attention" regarding the use of the General Power of Competence (GPC) and consideration the basis in law on which payments are made. Members are requested to read this comment carefully. Your officers are querying this with the auditor and the following points will be raised:

- The auditor has referred to “information drawn to our attention.” However the Council has not been informed regarding what this information is. The RFO needs to know what the information is so he can properly consider.
- The auditor make a statement to the effect that the GPC does not allow a council to spend money which is ultra-vires. It is assumed that the auditor has made this statement in support of their advice to look at the process in considering legality of payments. If the auditor had considered any payments to be ultra-vires then these would have been included in the external auditor’s report and certificate. However again clarity is needed and the RFO would request a positive statement from the auditor regarding their view.
- The Council does have the GPC, employing a Clerk holding the necessary qualification. This was confirmed by resolution by the newly elected Council on 17 May 2023. A statement to this effect was given to the auditors as part of the supporting information supplied for audit.
- Your officers carefully consider all expenditure incurred by the Council and the powers under which payments are made, to ensure the Council is acting within its powers.
- Your officers will further consider the process of the exercise of the GPC to see if there are any improvement which might benefit the Council but note that they consider the current process to be correct and proper.
- The consideration of this “information drawn to our attention” has resulted in an additional audit charge of £600 to the Council. The Council requests a breakdown of this charge, presumably additional work involved. It would also be helpful to know what the auditor’s approach to such matters will be in future – in what circumstances would the Council have an opportunity to respond whilst the audit is ongoing - the RFO assumes that this would be if the auditor had concerns in relation to the legality of the expenditure rather than concerns in relation to process but this is not clear.

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.
- b) Biodiversity - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- c) Crime & Disorder - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - no implications directly resulting 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 Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 require relevant bodies to complete and approve an Annual Return which must then be submitted to the external auditors by the 30 June each year. Undertaking this exercise is an important part of considering and managing the Council's risk. Furthermore, consideration and action in relation to the matters outlined in this report is essential in order to comply with the law.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. Robust financial management, control and compliance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 is a prerequisite of enabling the Council to deliver social value.

Financial implications

Whilst there are no financial implications arising directly from this report; there has been an additional charge of £600 in External Audit fees due to what is assumed to be a challenge by a local resident to the Council's accounts, although the RFO is seeking clarification and a breakdown of this amount.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the Officer report and

- (i) That the Council notes the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2024/25 from the auditors Moore, dated 12 September 2025.
- (ii) That the Council notes the Letter from Moore to the Town Clerk/ Chief Executive dated 17 September 2025.
- (iii) That authority is delegated to the Town Clerk/ Chief Executive to respond to the external auditors in relation to (i) and (ii) (above) ,based on this report and any other comments which Members wish to be incorporated.
- (iv) That the Council notes that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit was published on 26 September 2025.

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of **Witney Town Council**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

2 External auditor limited assurance opinion 2024/25

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

The council has answered 'Yes' to Assertion 4 of Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return which relates to how the Notice of Public Rights was advertised within the financial year 2024/25. Therefore, it relates to the Notice announcing the public right to review the 2023/24 return which was published during 2024/25. As noted in the Auditor Report last year, this notice was not correctly advertised therefore this Assertion should have been answered 'No'.

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

We identified during our review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return that boxes 1 and 7 of the prior year column (2024) on Section 2 - Accounting Statements did not agree to the figures provided on the audited 2023/24 form by £1. No explanation was provided for these amendments, and the column has not been marked as 'Restated' to bring it to the attention of the reader. We consider these amendments to be trivial and no significant concerns arise.

Please note that on the reconciliation between boxes 7 and 8 provided to us on the initial submission, box 7 did not agree to the figure per the AGAR. A revised reconciliation has been submitted which includes a debtor that was missed on the original reconciliation. This reconciliation agrees to box 7 and 8 of Section 2 and therefore no further concerns arise in this area. Please would the council ensure going forwards that the box 7 and 8 reconciliation submitted reconciles to the figures per Section 2.

On initial submission of the AGAR, we note that there was a typographical error within the date of one of the internal audit visits entered by the Internal Auditor on the Annual Internal Audit Report, which states that a visit took place on 16/10/2025 which should have stated 16/10/2024. This is an obvious mistake that we do not believe will cause any issues with understanding the report. The council, on their own behalf, have later provided us with an amended Annual Internal Audit Report with this date corrected however this amended report has been submitted without the council's name and website being entered. We believe this is a human error on completion and that the requirements to complete the internal audit have been correctly completed.

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

Moore

Date

12/09/2025

Smaller Authority Name: **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF ANNUAL AUDIT

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025
Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

- 1 The audit of accounts for (Smaller Authority Name) **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL** for the year ended 31 March 2025 has been completed and the accounts have been published.
- 2 The Annual Return is available for inspection by any local government elector in the area of (Smaller Authority Name) on application to **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**
 - (a) (Name of Clerk)
SHARON GROTH FSLCC FCMI
 - (b) (Address of Clerk)
TOWN HALL
MARKET SQUARE
WITNEY
OXON OX28 6AG
 - (c) (Telephone/email, and hours and arrangements to view)
Telephone (01993) 704379; e-mail info@witney-tc.gov.uk
Arrangements to view – by appointment, Monday to Friday
between 10am and 4pm
- 3 Copies will be provided to any person on payment of £ **NIL** for each copy of the Annual Return

Announcement made by (Name of Clerk)

Mrs. Sharon Groth, FSLCC FCMI

Date of Announcement

26 September 2025.

FULL COUNCIL



Agenda Item:	Climate Action Plan
Meeting Date:	Monday, 6 October 2025
Contact Officer:	Compliance and Environment Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Witney Town Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

Background

At its meeting on 26 June 2019, Witney Town Council formally declared a Climate Emergency. In response, the Council committed to taking all necessary measures to address climate change, setting a target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2028 in pursuit of a cleaner, more sustainable future for its residents.

Current Situation

Officers are in the process of drafting the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Member input has given direction following the Climate Action Working Party on 25 September 2025 (minutes attached) and the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 9 September 2025. The intention is to ensure that the final version reflects the Council's priorities.

The draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is being developed following the preliminary roadmap presented at the Climate and Biodiversity Committee meeting on 20 May 2025.

To support this work, a Council carbon footprint for 2025/26 is currently being established. This will enable a meaningful comparison with the baseline footprint recorded in 2019/20, helping to track progress and inform future actions.

Carbon audits have been requested for Burwell Hall, Corn Exchange, Town Hall, and the Administration Office. The reports will identify improvements that could be made by the Council to improve the energy performance of buildings that are owned or long-term leased. There may be challenges with the listed buildings and any proposals will need to be agreed with the Witney Town Hall Charity (leased buildings) and West Oxfordshire District Council as the local planning authority.

As an interim measure, officers have reviewed the current energy performance data for the buildings. The data highlights varying energy performance factors, which will need to be

assessed and reviewed by the Climate and Biodiversity Committee and the Climate Action Working Party once the latest carbon audits are completed.

Certain improvement actions may be accommodated within existing maintenance budgets, while others should be considered by the appropriate committees as Capital Improvement Projects during the budget planning process.

Several budget requests for consideration for 2026/27 have been identified as follows:

1. The Leys Recreation Ground – Installation of Public Water Refill Station

The proposal to install a public water refill station at The Leys Recreation Ground was originally initiated by a former Youth Council in 2019 but was not progressed at the time. In 2023, officers revisited the project and identified a suitable product for installation in a public park setting. The water refill station will require connection to services, and it is anticipated that officers will collaborate with Courtside Hubs CIC to identify a suitable location near the new community hub. An updated quotation for the refill station has been received, with estimated costs for service connections totalling approximately £4,500.

2. Burwell Hall – Energy Improvements

Burwell Hall, owned and managed by the Council, was constructed in the late 1980s. A feasibility report commissioned by Energy Solutions Oxfordshire identified several energy efficiency measures for consideration.

In 2023, a new gas boiler and upgraded heating controls were installed. Additional recommendations from the report will be implemented through existing maintenance budgets, such as replacing traditional lighting with energy-efficient LED alternatives.

Two capital energy improvements have been identified from the report:

- Solar PV Panels
Estimated cost: £13,000 – £16,000.

The hall's east and west-facing roofs offer sufficient space for the installation of solar photovoltaic panels, which will contribute to reducing electricity consumption and carbon emissions.

- Ceiling Insulation
Estimated cost: £18,000 – £22,000.

The main hall ceiling currently meets only the insulation standards of the 1980s. Enhancing insulation below the ceiling will help reduce heat loss in winter and heat gain in summer, improving comfort for users and lowering annual energy costs.

Council officers will continue to explore external funding opportunities to support these capital improvements.

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 – Benefits are shared across all residents, promoting fairness and inclusion. Free water access supports healthier choices, especially for those on lower incomes.
- b) Biodiversity - The Council must ensure any issues are dealt with in line with legislation and its own policy.
- c) Crime & Disorder - No direct crime and disorder implications have been identified in relation to this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - The proposed actions will contribute to reducing the Council's carbon emissions, improved energy efficiency and decreased waste and support wider climate mitigation and adaptation measures across Witney contributing to the Council's environmental sustainability goals.

Risk

In decision making Members should consider 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.

- a) Social benefits - Enhanced public spaces that promote community engagement and support healthier lifestyles.
- b) Health and wellbeing - Increased access to quality green spaces and climate resilience measures that support the physical and mental wellbeing of residents.

Financial implications

Implementation of retrofit measures and infrastructure projects will require capital investment but will deliver operational savings over time through reduced energy consumption.

All external funding opportunities will be explored to support climate action costs, including relevant government grants and partnership funding.

Following approval of the capital projects, officers will undertake work to finalise detailed costings to support budget preparation.

The Council hold a Climate Initiatives EMR (366) which may be used for some of the above – at this point, Members are invited to note the recommendations for further scrutiny during budget-setting.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider the capital project requests for the 2026/27 municipal year:
 - a) The Leys Recreation Ground – Installation of Public Water Refill Station
Estimated cost = £4,500.
 - b) Burwell Hall – Energy Improvements - Solar PV Panels
Estimated cost: £13,000 – £16,000.
 - c) Burwell Hall – Energy Improvements -Ceiling Insulation
Estimated cost: £18,000 – £22,000.

**CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Thursday, 25 September 2025

At 4.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	D Edwards-Hughes J Robertshaw	R Smith (In place of J Aitman)
Officers:	Adam Clapton Zoe Henstridge Derek Mackenzie	Deputy Town Clerk Administrative Support - Halls & Green Spaces Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Aitman, Councillor R Smith attended as a substitute.

8 MINUTES

The minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 22 July 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 22 July 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

Cllr D Enright joined the meeting at 4:05pm

9 WITNEY PARISH CARBON FOOTPRINT

The Working Party received and considered a report which complimented the Compliance and Environment Officer's progress with the Councils Strategy & Action Plan. The report had originally been considered by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee on 9 September and Members of the Working Party were now asked for their recommendations and proposed actions.

Members welcomed the report which highlighted the potential goals in reducing the carbon footprint of the parish and noted that a number of those goals were already being carried out in the Council's activity such as their support for community bus services, the community fridge and larder, promotion of active travel and improved land management which incorporated the

use of allotments and community orchards. It was noted that further changes could be incorporated into the further actions that the Working Party and Climate & Biodiversity Committee set.

Although wider parish objectives were part of the Council's overall objective to be carbon neutral by 2028, it was agreed carbon reduction of the Council's facilities and estate should take precedence and that this should be the main focus of the Working Party.

Members appreciated the short time that the Compliance and Environment Officer had been in post in order to compile the assessments and reports between meetings of the Committee and Working Party and welcomed receipt of an impact report on the Council's activities at the earliest opportunity.

Recommended:

1. That, the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer be noted and,
2. That, an impact report of the Council Activities be provided and,
3. That, the changes be incorporated where possible, but precedence be given to the town council's facilities.

10 **DRAFT CLIMATE STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN**

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer, along with the draft climate strategy and action plan for the Council. The report and draft plan had originally been considered by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee on 9 September and Members of the Working Party were now asked for their recommendations and proposed actions.

The C&EO welcomed the points raised by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee at their meeting on 9 September. Members heard that some of the suggested improvements would come from existing budgets however others would have to be included in the 2026-27 budget setting process.

Additionally, Members heard that work was ongoing with the Action Plan this included collaboration between all Officers to ensure that any action followed the overall corporate strategy plan and reflected individual Committees terms of reference.

Members made additional suggestions to refine the details within the Action Plan, such as the inclusion at an early stage of the financial cost of each action as well as the potential carbon reduction impact figures so as to allow the Council and residents to see, as each Key Performance Indicator was reached, the cumulative impact of carbon reduction achieved.

Members asked that the actions be placed into order of impact and for Council and Community actions to be separated. They acknowledged that although the action plan and strategy were not yet at a quantitative stage, that the work so far was a great starting point and were pleased with the progress made.

Lastly, various access to grant funding options were discussed and the C&EO advised they were aware of these and that each would be explored further as the action plan was implemented.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers incorporate the suggestions of the Working Party into the final version of the Action Plan and Climate Change Strategy and
3. That, any grant funding opportunities are explored by Officers.

11 PUBLIC HALLS - BURWELL HALL

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer concerning potential improvements to Burwell Hall.

Although officers were in the process of obtaining assessments for the Council's other facilities, an energy audit in 2022 had highlighted several further areas for improvement after the replacement of the boiler which was completed in 2023.

Members were advised that small changes such as the replacement of lighting was carried out as the need arose and that the existing maintenance budget for the hall would be used. However larger projects such as the ones highlighted in the 2022 report for improvements to the halls ceiling (£10,000-15,000) and the introduction of Solar PV arrays (£10,000 – 12,000) would require budget setting or grant funding.

Officers would look to obtain updated estimates for the costs of the ceiling and Solar PV works ahead of the 2026-27 budget setting however, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that there was an existing Energy efficiency budget for the Councils buildings which may be utilised towards the cost of improvements.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, updated estimates for Solar PV and Ceiling insulation be obtained ahead of 2026-27 budget setting and,
3. That, the level of the existing energy efficiency be investigated by Officers.

12 WATER REFILL STATION - THE LEYS

The Working Party received and considered a verbal update from the Compliance & Environment Officer concerning a potential budget addition for the 2026-27 year.

Members heard that this scheme had originally been the idea of the previous Youth Council. The Operations Manager had reviewed the project in 2023 and indicated a cost of approx. £3,500 to implement.

Members were supportive as it's need was evidenced at events previously held on The Leys. They asked that the new Youth Council and Stronger Communities Committee be involved in the delivery of the project along with a consideration that the fountain be utilised by both people and dogs.

Recommended:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,

2. That, the project be supported by this Working Party and recommended for inclusion in the 2026-27 budget for consideration by the Stronger Communities Committee.

Cllr D Enright left the meeting at 4:39pm

13 **CARBON LITERACY TRAINING**

Members of the working party that were also West Oxfordshire District Council members were asked to provide their feedback on research.

The Chair advised that she has attended meetings held by WODC however, had not been able to progress the idea of having the carbon literacy training opened up to the Town Council.

Cllr R Smith advised that the decision would likely be taken by the Audit & Governance Committee and would follow up with her fellow WODC Councillors to request a response from WODC.

Recommended:

1. That, WODC Council members follow up with the Audit & Governance Committee.

14 **WEBSITE INFORMATION**

Working Party members advised they had seen several Council websites which hosted green and climate initiatives.

Members provided ideas of Websites from other Councils and agreed to forward the details they had to the Compliance & Environment Officer for consideration.

Additionally, Members would continue to look and provide details of anything they found that could be of further interest.

Recommended:

1. That, the websites as advised be noted and,
2. That, Members continue to provide additional material.

15 **WITNEY ECO FAIR**

The Working Party received an update on the Eco Fair scheduled for 9th October from the Compliance & Environment Officer.

Plans were in place and 9 out of 32 of the invited representatives had replied to advise they would be taking part. Confirmed attendees were from WODC, OCC, WTC, Low Carbon Hub, BBWOT and the Cherwell Collective

The C&EO would continue to chase up those that had not responded, those that were unable to attend would be asked if they had literature that could be displayed in their absence.

Members asked if the digital poster advertising the event could be shared and flyers could be made for their use, distribution in the Corn Exchange and also shared by the Chair, who would be attending a similar event being held by St Marys Church Eco Group.

Recommended:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the digital poster be shared and small flyers be created.

The meeting closed at: 4.52 pm

Chair

FULL COUNCIL



Agenda Item: Public Convenience Provision in Witney

Meeting Date: Monday, 6 October 2025

Contact Officer: Town Clerk/CEO – Sharon Groth

The purpose of this report is to

- brief Members on West Oxfordshire District Council's (WODC) Public Conveniences (PCs) Review decision of 10 September 2025 and its proposal to transfer responsibility for facilities to town and parish councils;
- to set out the specific implications for Witney (Leys Recreation Ground and Langdale Gate); and to seek direction on the Town Council's position and next steps.

Background

WODC operates 13 sets of PCs across 8 locations. In light of financial pressures and anticipated local government reorganisation towards Unitary Authorities in 2028, the District Council's Executive agreed to engage Town/Parish Councils on transferring facilities, streamlining provision where transfer is not feasible, and closing some sites where alternative provision exists.

WODC has written to Witney Town Council (19 Sept 2025) initiating engagement and requesting an indication by 30 November 2025 whether the Town Council wishes to explore transfer. Where transfer is not pursued, WODC anticipates closures or lease terminations by 31 March 2026; transfers to complete by 30 June 2026.

WODC's basis for transfer allows either peppercorn lease or (where not within a WODC car park) freehold at nominal consideration, typically with covenants securing continued provision or a clawback/capital receipt on disposal. Existing WODC cleaning/maintenance contracts would end on transfer, requiring local arrangements.

Current Situation

A) Leys Recreation Ground PCs

- Status & context: The existing standalone PC block at The Leys is adjacent to the leisure/café hub. Courtside Hubs CIC/The Leys Hub are bringing additional PC provision within the complex, accessible from the car park during café opening times.

- WODC intention if not transferred: *Closure* of the existing Leys PC block (with potential for repurposing the building).
- Opportunity: With new hub PCs available, the existing block could be repurposed (e.g., changing rooms, storage, community facility) to meet Leys users' needs and avoid dilapidation.

B) Langdale Gate PCs

- Status & context: Centrally located near the car park; part of the building accommodates Shopmobility which WODC seeks to protect.
- WODC intention if not transferred: *Retention* by WODC, due to location and Shopmobility, but they have requested the Town Council consider taking them on.
- Transfer terms noted: Would consider long lease or freehold (freehold value restricted by covenant to £1, with requirement to continue PC provision or pay capital receipt if sold). Shopmobility's continued provision to be protected in any case.
- Implication: On the evidence provided (condition, low income, ongoing costs), transfer would likely add a net recurrent cost burden to the Town Council.

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

Retaining publicly accessible PCs at Langdale Gate (by WODC) supports accessibility for disabled residents, older people, families, and those with health conditions.

Ensuring ongoing PC access at The Leys via the Hub and exploring inclusive designs for any repurposed space (e.g., accessible changing) supports equality of access.

b) Biodiversity

Neutral—repurposing existing fabric at The Leys avoids new build and land-take; any minor works should protect green infrastructure on the recreation ground.

c) Crime & Disorder

Repurposing the disused Leys block reduces risk of anti-social behaviour and vandalism associated with vacant buildings.

Good lighting, sightlines and natural surveillance to be considered in any design.

d) Environment & Climate Emergency

Potential carbon savings from adaptive reuse of the Leys structure versus demolition/new build.

Future energy efficiency upgrades (e.g., insulation, efficient lighting, water-saving fittings) can be included in repurposing works and in any negotiated standards for WODC-retained sites.

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.

Financial exposure if the Town Council assumes Langdale Gate: ongoing net revenue cost plus future capital liabilities.

Asset deterioration at The Leys if the building is closed without timely repurposing.

Service continuity risks if Hub opening hours differ materially from historic Leys PC hours—mitigations via signage and communications.

Legal/estate risks around covenants and Shopmobility protection—mitigated through due diligence and heads of terms.

Social Value

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

Sustaining convenient, clean, and accessible WC provision in the town centre and at The Leys underpins participation in leisure, events, and local commerce.

Repurposing the Leys block for changing/storage supports grassroots sport and community activity.

Financial implications

According to WODC Officers the current following costs are:

Leys Recreation Ground PCs:

WODC 10-year condition estimate (existing block): £49,275.

Operating cost & usage (current): Annual cost £29,670; income £584; footfall 2,925; opening 07:30–18:00 (3 cleans/day).

Langdale Gate PCs:

WODC 10-year condition estimate: £45,350.

Operating cost & usage (current): Annual cost £32,214; income £1,092; footfall 5,464; opening 07:30–18:00 (3 cleans/day).

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report, and WODC's Public Conveniences Review decision and engagement timetable: and

1. agree that Witney Town Council does not take on the Langdale Gate PCs at this time, noting WODC's stated intention to retain them and to protect Shopmobility.
2. agree in principle to seek the freehold (or a suitable lease) of the former Leys PCs building upon WODC closure, to repurpose it to meet the needs of Leys users and to prevent dilapidation, subject to satisfactory terms, covenants, and business case.
3. authorise the Town Clerk to engage with WODC [and Courtside Hubs CIC/The Leys Hub], and to report back with detailed options, costs, and funding proposals.



OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

1. (VARIOUS ROADS - WEST OXFORDSHIRE) (PROHIBITION AND RESTRICTION OF WAITING AND PERMITTED PARKING)

(VARIATION No.*) ORDER 20**

2. (WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT) (DISABLED PERSONS' PARKING PLACES) (AMENDMENT No.*) ORDER 20**

STATEMENT OF REASONS

Oxfordshire County Council has been awarded a sum from the UK Government's 'Active travel' fund to introduce enhancements to deliver improvements that support and maintain the traffic arrangement on High Street and Market Square in Witney.

In September 2023 people were asked to share what was really important to them, and to highlight things that they would like to see improved. This helped inform the outline design which included: enhancing public spaces while protecting the town's history and character, supporting local businesses and markets, making it easier and more enjoyable to walk, wheel and cycle, upgrading access to public transport, and improving safety for all users

This outline design was put forward in 2024, with all the responses received subsequently reviewed to help identify and plan for any necessary design changes, which are now being proposed formally.

The improvements aim to enhance the amenities of the area whilst retaining the town's history and character, also helping to improve the look and feel of Witney for visitors, and for those arriving by walking, cycling or public transport.

With regards to the amendment in 'Disabled Persons Parking Place' provision – following assessment, it became clear that the existing bays did not meet accessibility standards, primarily because they were not located adjacent to a footway. This creates significant challenges for individuals with mobility impairments when entering or exiting vehicles safely. It was also identified through an accessibility audit and Road Safety Audit that footway widths in some locations were insufficient to safely accommodate wheelchair users and the level of footfall typically experienced in the town centre.

As such, the proposals look to reconfigure the location and number of disabled persons' parking places to ensure they are:

- Located adjacent to footways for safe access,
- Designed to meet accessibility best practice, and
- Delivered alongside widened footways and improved sight lines at pedestrian crossing points.

¹ Section 1 (1) (a) Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

²Section 1 (1) (c) Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

Blue Badge holders also remain permitted to park on double yellow lines for up to three hours, where it is safe and reasonable to do so.

The County Council continues its responsibility to consider the provision of convenient and ¹ safe movement of motor vehicles and other traffic, ensuring that danger is minimised ² whilst facilitating the effective and safe passage of traffic.

Detailed documents accompany this form.

Date: 17 September 2025

Traffic Regulation Order & Schemes, for the
Director of Environment & Highways
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford, OX1 1ND

¹ Section 1 (1) (a) Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

²Section 1 (1) (c) Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS - WEST OXFORDSHIRE) (PROHIBITION AND RESTRICTION
OF WAITING AND PERMITTED PARKING) (VARIATION No.*) ORDER 20**

Oxfordshire County Council ("the Council") in exercise of its powers under Sections 1, 2, 4, 32 & 45 and Part IV Schedule 9 to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("the Act") and all other enabling powers and after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act, make the following Order.

1. This Order may be cited as the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.*) Order 20** and shall come into force on the day of 20**.
2. (1) Any reference in this Order to any enactment (meaning any act and any subordinate legislation as defined in the Interpretation Act 1978) shall be construed as a reference to that enactment as amended or replaced by any subsequent enactment.

(2) Words importing the masculine gender shall also include the feminine gender and words in the singular include the plural and vice versa.

(3) The restrictions imposed by this Order shall be in addition to and not in derogation from any restriction or requirement imposed by any other enactment.
3. The Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) Order 2012, as amended by the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.1) Order 2012, the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.2) Order 2013, the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.3) Order 2014, and the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.4) Order 2014, the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.5) Order 2014, the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.6) Order 2014, the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.7) Order 2014, the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.8) Order 2015, the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.9) Order 2016, the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.9) Order 2016, the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.10) Order 2016, the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) (Variation No.11) Order 2016,

Order 2024 (“the 2012 Order”) is amended in the manner and to the extent specified in the Schedule to this Order.

GIVEN UNDER the Common Seal of the Oxfordshire County Council

this day of 20**.

SCHEDULE

Amendments to “the 2012 Order”.

Schedule amendments as follows:

1.)

Schedule 10 is deleted and replaced as follows:

“SCHEDULE 10

Prohibition of loading / unloading at any time

ITEMS 1 – 8:

Items not used.

ITEM 9: BRIZE NORTON

1. Carterton Road:

Both sides – from the western side of the vehicular access to No.1 Carterton Road, westwards to the roundabout at its junction with Brize Norton Road and Upavon Way and including the full extent of the roundabout at its junction with Norton Way.
This road is also partly located in Carterton.

2. Monahan Way:

Both sides – Monahan Way from its junction with Upavon Way to the Teasel Way roundabout (including the full extent of the Broadshires Way roundabout and the full extent of the Norton Way roundabout, and the section of the Pavilion access road from the eastern side of that roundabout to the eastern side of the central island in the mouth of that access road).
This road is also partly located in Carterton.

3. Norton Way:

Both sides – from its junction with Carterton Road to its junction with Monahan Way, and including the western spur for a distance of 45 metres westwards.
This road is also partly located in Carterton.

ITEMS 10 – 12:

Items not used.

ITEM 13: CARTERTON

1. Alvescot Road:

Both sides - from its junction with Burford Road south westwards for a distance of 106 metres.
2. Broadshires Way:

Both sides - from its junction with Northwood Crescent to the eastern property boundary of the Leisure Centre and southwards to its junction with Monahan Way.
3. Carterton Road:

See Item 9 Brize Norton above.
4. Monahan Way:

See Item 9 Brize Norton above.
5. Norton Way:

See Item 9 Brize Norton above.

ITEMS 14 – 77:

Items not used.

ITEM 78: WITNEY

1. Church Green:

Western Arm - both sides - from its junction with Market Square southwards for a distance of 20 metres.
2. Corn Street:
 - (a) North side:
 - (i) from its junction with Market Square westwards for a distance of 35 metres;

- (ii) from the boundary between Nos. 26 and 28 Corn Street westwards for a distance of 34.5 metres.
- (b) South side:
 - (i) from its junction with Market Square westwards for a distance of 30 metres;
 - (ii) from a point 0.5 metres east of the boundary between Nos. 21 and 23 Corn Street westwards to a point 3 metres east of the boundary between Nos. 29 and 31 Corn Street.

3. High Street:

West side—from the southern flank wall of No. 1 High Street northwards for a distance of 36 metres.

4. Market Square:

(a) Main route (East side):

- (i) from a point 48 metres north of its junction with Corn Street northwards for a distance of 12 metres.
- (ii) from a point 2 metres south of a point opposite the southern flank wall of No. 1 High Street southwards for a distance of 24 metres.

b) Main route (West side):

- (i) from a point 2 metres north of the boundary between Nos. 26 and 28 Market Square southwards for a distance of 19 metres;
- (ii) from its junction with Church Green northwards for a distance of 20 metres;
- (iii) from the southern flank wall of No. 1 High Street southwards for a distance of 23 metres;
- (iv) from a point 29.6 metres south of the southern flank wall of No. 1 High Street southwards for a distance of 11.4 metres

(c) War Memorial - The whole width of the north and south sides of the minor carriageway which connects the eastern and western arms of the western carriageway immediately north of the War Memorial.

5. Newland:

North east side - from a point 140 metres south east of its junction with Bridge Street south eastwards for a distance of 30 metres.

6. Welch Way:

Both sides - from point 92 metres from its junction with High Street westwards to its junction with Woodford Way a distance of approximately 162 metres (but excluding any Controlled Lengths).

2.)

In SCHEDULE 15, Item 78: Witney (No Waiting at Any Time) is deleted and replaced as follows:

“ITEM 78: WITNEY

1. Ashcombe Crescent:

Both sides - from the eastern kerb line of Woodford Way eastwards for a distance of 9 metres.

2. Bridge Street:

Northwest side - from a point 62 metres north east of the junction with Mill Street north eastwards for a distance of 19.5 metres.

3. Burford Road:

(1) Both sides - from its junction with Woodford Way westwards to its junction with Meadow Lane.

(2) South side - from a point opposite the common property boundary of Nos 20 and 22 Burford Road, eastwards for a distance of 60 metres

Burford Road Service Road

Both sides - from a point opposite the common property boundary of No.7 Burford Road Service Road and No.46 Moor Avenue eastwards to its junction with Moor Avenue.

4. Burwell Drive:

Both sides - from the southern kerb line of Curbridge Road southwards for a distance of 16 metres.

5. Church Green:

(a) Eastern arm – east side:

(i) from its junction with Farm Mill Lane northwards for a distance of 18.5 metres;

- (ii) from a point 34.5 metres north of its junction with Farm Mill Lane northwards for a distance of 5 metres;
- (iii) from a point 53 metres north of its junction with Farm Mill Lane northwards for a distance of 25.5 metres;
- (iv) from a point 90.5 metres north of its junction with Farm Mill Lane northwards for a distance of 5.5 metres;
- (v) from a point 101 metres north of its junction with Farm Mill Lane northwards for a distance of 8.5 metres;
- (vi) from a point 177 metres north of its junction with Farm Mill Lane northwards to its junction with Market Square, a distance of 6 metres.

(b) Central arm – East side:

from a point opposite and 0.5 metres south of the southern flank wall of No. 24 Church Green southwards to a point 14 metres south of the northern flank wall of No. 42 Church Green.

(c) Central arm – West side:

from a point 2.5 metres north of the southern flank wall of No. 24 Church Green southwards to the end of the central island dividing the western and central arms and including the area on the south and west of the central island.

(d) Western arm:

- (i) Both sides - from its junction with Market Square southwards for a distance of 20 metres.
- (ii) West side - from a point 156 metres south of the junction of Corn Street southwards for a distance of 6 metres;
- (iii) West side - from a point 186 metres south of the junction of Corn Street southwards for a distance of 8.5 metres.

6. Church Lane:

(a) East side –

- (i) from its junction with Oxford Hill south westwards for a distance of 28 metres.
- (ii) From the northern kerb line of the access to the Cogges Manor Farm Museum, north-eastwards for a distance of 25 metres.

(b) West side –

- (i) from its junction with Newland south westwards for a distance of 22 metres.
- (ii) from the northern kerb line of Meadow View, north-eastwards for a distance of 12 metres.
- (iii) from the southern kerb line of Meadow View, south-westwards for a distance of 20 metres.

7. Corndell Gardens:

Both sides - from its junction with Corn Street south westwards for a distance of 33 metres .

South side - from a point opposite the common property boundary of Nos.9 & 11 Corndell Gardens, westwards for a distance of 22 metres.

8. Corn Street:

(a) North side:

- (i) from its junction with Market Square westwards to the boundary between Nos. 56 and 58 Corn Street;
- (ii) from a point 21 metres east of its junction with Lowell Place westwards to a point 4 metres east of the boundary between Nos.154 and 156 Corn Street
- (iii) from a point 7 metres east of the boundary between Nos.160 and 162 Corn Street eastwards for a distance of 6 metres;
- (iv) from a point 46 metres east of its junction with Corn Bar westwards to its junction with Welch Way.

(b) South side:

- (i) from its junction with Market Square to a point opposite and 5 metres west of its junction with Marlborough Lane
- (ii) from a point 14 metres east of the centre line of the junction with The Crofts to a point 18 metres west of the centre line of said junction.
- (iii) from a point 12 metres east of the centre line of the junction with Corndell Gardens to a point 33 metres west of the centre line of said junction.

- (iv) from a point 44 metres west of the centre line of the junction with Corndell Gardens westwards for 4 metres
- (v) from a point 12 metres east of the centre line of the junction with Swingburn Place to a point 12 metres west of the centre line of said junction.
- (vi) from the western property boundary of No. 153 Corn Street to a point 12 metres west of the centre line of the junction with Queen Emmas Dyke.

9. Crawley Road:

Both sides - from its junction with Hailey Road north westwards for a distance of 50.5 metres.

10. Curbridge Road:

(a) Both sides - from a point 111.5 metres west of its junction with Burwell Drive westwards for a distance of 46 metres.

(b) South side - from a point 19 metres west of the western kerb line of Burwell Drive eastwards to a point 19 metres east of the eastern kerb line of Burwell Drive.

11. Dark Lane:

(a) Northwest side:

- (i) from the western kerb line of Woodford Way south westwards for a distance of 10 metres;
- (ii) from a point 18.5 metres north east of the north eastern flank wall of No. 30 Dark Lane south westwards for a distance of 22.5 metres;
- (iii) from a point 3.5 metres south west of the north eastern flank wall of No. 28 Dark Lane south westwards to a point 2 metres south west of the south western flank wall of No. 26 Dark Lane, including the turning area at the gated end of the road.

(b) Southeast side – from the western kerb line of Woodford Way, southwards to the gated end of the road.

(c) Access Road to Nos. 30 to 84 Dark Lane: Both sides - from the south-eastern flank wall of No. 30 Dark Lane north westwards for a distance of 4 metres.

12. Farmers Close:

Both sides - from its junction with New Yatt Road north westwards for a distance of 45 metres.

13. Farm Mill Lane:

(a) Both sides - from a point 105 metres east of its junction with Church Green eastwards for a distance of 19 metres, to include all sides of the turning head.

(b) North side:

(i) from its junction with Church Green south eastwards and eastwards for a distance of 36 metres;

(ii) from a point 60 metres east of its junction with Church Green eastwards for a distance of 6 metres.

(c) South side - from its junction with Church Green eastwards for a distance of 52 metres.

14. Gloucester Place:

(a) North side - from its junction with High Street westwards for a distance of 122.5 metres.

(b) South side - from its junction with High Street westwards for a distance of 117.5 metres.

15. Hailey Road:

Both sides - from its junction with West End northwards to a point 1 metre north of the boundary between Nos. 28 and 30 Hailey Road.

16. High Street:

(a) East side:

(i) from a point 6 metres south of the boundary between Nos. 108 and 110 High Street southwards to a point 5 metres north of the boundary between Nos. 64 and 66 High Street;

(ii) from a point 61 metres north of its junction with Welch Way southwards to the boundary between Nos. 14 and 16a High Street;

(iii) from a point 4 metres north of the northern flank wall of Nos. 2 to 8 High Street southwards to its junction with Market Square.

(b) West side:

(i) — from the southern flank wall of No. 1 High Street north eastwards to a point 25 metres north of the northern kerb line of Welch Way;

(ii) from a point 3.5 metres north east of the boundary between Nos. 43 and 43a High Street north eastwards to a point 43 metres south west of its junction with Mill Street.

(c) Both sides – from its junction with Welch Way, southwards to its a junction with Market Square (excluding any signed Disabled Persons' Parking Places, and designated Bus & Taxi Parking Places)

17. Highworth Place:

Both sides - for its whole length.

18. Holloway Road:

(a) Both sides - from its junction with Corn Street northwards for a distance of 32 metres.

(b) East side:

(i) from its junction with Welch Way southwards for a distance 47 metres;

(ii) from a point 48 metres north of its junction with Corn Street northwards for a distance of 10 metres;

(iii) from the southern-most boundary of No. 90 Holloway Road southwards to the northern-most boundary of No. 64 Holloway Road;

(iv) from the southern-most boundary of No. 50 Holloway Road southwards to the northern-most boundary of No. 24 Holloway Road.

(c) West side - from its junction with Welch Way southwards for a distance of 70 metres, including the bell mouths to Welch Way service Road and Ashcombe Close.

19. Kingsfield Crescent:

(a) North west side - from its junction with the B4022 Newland north eastwards for a distance of 30.5 metres.

(b) South east side - from its junction with the B4022 Newland north eastwards for a distance of 36 metres.

20. Langdale Gate (Buttercross-Witan Way section):

Both sides - the whole length.

21. Langdale Gate - Southern Arm accessing Nos. 18 to 112 Langdale Gate:

- (a) Both sides – from its junction with the main part of Langdale Gate southwards for a distance of 27 metres.
- (b) East side – from a point 48 metres southeast of its junction with the main part of Langdale Gate south eastwards to its boundary with Swinbrook Court.
- (c) West side – from a point 67 metres southeast of its junction with the main part of Langdale Gate south eastwards to its boundary with Swinbrook Court.

22. Lowell Place:

Both sides - from its junction with Corn Street northwards for a distance of 11.5 metres.

23. Market Square – Pedestrianised area (north of Corn Street/ Langdale Gate – Buttercross junction) - for the whole of the pedestrianised area.

24. Market Square – Main route:

a) East side:

- (i) from its junction with Langdale Gate/Butter Cross northwards to a point 8 metres south of the boundary between Nos. 48 and 49 Market Square;
- (ii) from a point opposite the southern flank wall of No. 1 High Street southwards for a distance of 29.5 metres.

(b) West side:

- (i) from its junction with Corn Street northwards for a distance of 69 metres;
- (ii) from the southern flank wall of No. 1 High Street southwards for a distance of 41 metres.

Both sides – for its entire length, from its junction with Market Square, southwards to its a junction with Corn Street/Langdale Gate (excluding any signed Disabled Persons' Parking Places, and designated Bus & Taxi Parking Places).

25. Market Square – southeast of Buttercross:

- (a) East side - from the southern kerb line of Langdale Gate southwards for a distance of 20 metres.
- (b) West side - from its junction with Langdale Gate southwards for a distance of 16 metres.

26. Market Square – south west of Buttercross,:

- (a) East side - from its junction with Langdale Gate southwards for a distance of 15.5 metres.
- (b) West side:
 - (i) from its junction with Corn Street southwards for a distance of 24 metres;
 - (ii) from its junction with Church Green northwards for a distance of 10 metres.

27. Market Square – north of the War Memorial:

Both sides - the whole length of the north and south sides of the minor carriageway which connects the eastern and western arms of the western carriageway immediately north of the War Memorial.

28. Mill Street:

- (a) North side - from its junction with Burford Road eastwards to a point 2.5 metres east of the boundary between Nos. 66 and 68 Mill Street.
- (b) South side - from its junction with Woodford Way eastwards for a distance of 107.5 metres.

29. Moor Avenue

- (1) West side - from its junction with Burford Road southwards to a point 5 metres south of the common property boundary of Nos.42 and 40 Moor Avenue
- (2) East side - from its junction with Burford Road southwards to a point 27 metres north of the northern property boundary of No.41 Moor Avenue.

30. New Bridge Street:

Both sides - from its junction with Witan Way north eastwards to its junction with Marsh Walk.

31. New Close Lane:

Both sides – from the junction with the A415, westwards for its entire length.

32. Newland:

Northeast side:

- (i) from a point 140 metres south east of its junction with Bridge Street south eastwards for a distance of 30 metres;
- (ii) from a point 10.5 metres north west of its junction with Kingsfield Crescent south eastwards to a point 10 metres south east of the same junction.

Southwest side:

- (i) from the northern kerb line of the access to the Newland Industrial Estate, north-westwards for a distance of 10 metres.
- (ii) from the southern kerb line of the access to the Newland Industrial Estate, south-eastwards for a distance of 15 metres
- (iii) from the northern kerb line of Church Lane, north-westwards for a distance of 11 metres.
- (iv) from the northern kerb line of Compton Way, north-westwards for a distance of 12 metres.
- (v) from the southern kerb line of Compton Way, south-eastwards for a distance of 10 metres.

33. Newland Mill:

- (a) North side – from its junction with Newland south westwards for a distance of 14 metres.
- (b) South side – from its junction with Newland south westwards for a distance of 37 metres.

34. New Yatt Road:

West side - from a point 27 metres north of the centre line of its junction with Farmers Close southwards for a distance of 59 metres.

35. Oxford Hill:

(a) North east side - from its junction with Judds Close south eastwards to its junction with Jubilee Way.

(b) South west side – from its junction with Church Lane south eastwards to the boundary between Nos. 4 and 6 Oxford Hill.

36. Pensclose.

Both sides – from its junction with Newland north eastwards for a distance of 54 metres.

37. Puck Lane:

Both sides - from its junction with Mill Street southwards for a distance of 38.5 metres.

38. Queen Emma's Dyke:

Both sides - from its junction with Corn Street southwards for a distance of 14 metres.

39. Service Road to Health Centre:

Both sides – the whole length.

40. Station Lane (main road east to west):

(a) North side - from its junction with Ducklington Lane eastwards and north eastwards to its junction with Witan Way.

(b) South side:

(i) from its junction with Ducklington Lane eastwards to a point 96.5 east of its junction with Avenue One;

(ii) from a point 53 metres west of its junction with Avenue Two eastwards and north eastwards to its junction with Witan Way.

41. Station Lane (minor road north to south):

(i) Both sides - from its junction with Station Lane east-west arm northwards for a distance of 42 metres.

(ii) East side - from its junction with Church Green southwards for a distance of 151 metres.

- (iii) West side - from a point 97 metres south of its junction with Church Green, southwards for a distance of 54 metres (to include both sides of the short section leading to the Leys gateway).

42. Station Lane Industrial Estate:

(a) Avenue One - both sides - from its junction with Station Lane southwards for a distance of 44 metres.

(b) Avenue Two (north-south section) both sides -

- (i) from its junction with Station Lane southwards for a distance of 38.5 metres.

- (ii) from a point 12.5 metres south of the centre of the junction with Avenue Two (east-west spur) southwards for its remaining length.

(c) Avenue Three – both sides - from its junction with Station Lane southwards for a distance of 39.5 metres.

(d) Avenue Four:

- (i) East side - from its junction with Station Lane southwards for a distance of 27.5 metres.

- (ii) West side - from its junction with Station Lane southwards for a distance of 22 metres.

43. Swingburn Place:

Both sides - from its junction with Corn Street southwards for a distance of 13 metres.

44. The Crofts:(north-south arm)

(a) East side:

- (i) from the southern kerb line of Corn Street southwards for a distance of 19 metres;

- (ii) from a point 41 metres south of the southern kerb line of Corn Street southwards to a point 10 metres south of the southern kerb line of the east-west arm of The Crofts

(b) West side:

- (i) from the southern kerb line of Corn Street southwards for a distance of 19 metres;

- (ii) from a point 31 metres south of the southern kerb line of Corn Street southwards for a distance of 35 metres.

45. The Crofts: (east-west arm)

- (a) North side - from the eastern kerb line of The Crofts (north-south arm) eastwards for a distance of 10 metres.

- (b) South side:

- (i) from the eastern kerb line of The Crofts (north-south arm) eastwards to a point 22.5 metres west of its junction with Highworth Place;
 - (ii) from a point 7.5 metres west of its junction with Highworth Place eastwards and southwards for a distance of 60.5 metres.

46. The Old Coach Yard:

Both sides - the whole length (including the cul-de-sac).

47. Waine Rush View:

Both sides:

- (i) from its junction with Witan Way westwards for a distance of 14 metres;
- (ii) from a point 69 metres west of its junction with Witan Way westwards for a distance of 56 metres to its junction with Farriers Court including the bell-mouth to Weavers Barn.

48. Welch Way:

Both sides – the whole length.

49. West End:

- (a) Northeast side:

- (i) from its junction with Bridge Street north westwards to the boundary between Nos. 14 and 16 West End;
 - (ii) from a point 4.5 metres north west of the boundary between Nos. 14 and 16 West End north westwards for a distance of 3 metres;
 - (iii) from a point 2.5 metres south east of the western flank wall of No. 34a West End north westwards to a point 2.5 metres north of the southern flank wall of No. 36 West End;

- (iv) from the boundary between Nos. 40 and 42 West End north westwards to its junction with Hailey Road.

(b) South side:

- (i) from its junction with Bridge Street north westwards for a distance of 51 metres;
- (ii) from a point 59.5 metres north west of its junction with Bridge Street north westwards to the eastern flank wall of No. 11 West End;
- (iii) from the boundary between Nos. 19 and 21 West End north westwards to its junction with Crawley Road.

50. Windrush Valley Road:

- (a) North side - from its junction with Tower Hill westwards to the boundary between Nos. 2 and 4 Windrush Valley Road.
- (b) South side – from its junction with Tower Hill westwards to its junction with Windrush Close.

51. Woodford Way:

Both sides – the whole length.

52. Witan Way:

Both sides - the whole length.

53. Woodgreen - Southwest arm from Broad Hill A4095:

- (a) East side - from a point 75 metres north of its junction with Broad Hill A4095 northwards for a distance of 34 metres.
- (b) West side - from a point 18 metres north of its junction with Broad Hill A4095 northwards for a distance of 92 metres.

54. Woodgreen - (Narrow Hill)

(a) North west side:

- (i) from its junction with West End northwards to a point 7.5 metres south of the boundary between Nos. 19 and 21 Woodgreen;
- (ii) from its junction with Woodgreen (West side) south westwards for a distance of 14 metres.

(b) South east side:

- (i) from its junction with West End northwards to a point 7 metres south of the boundary between Nos. 22 and 24 Woodgreen;
- (ii) from its junction with Woodgreen (West side) south westwards for a distance of 18 metres.”

**THE COMMON SEAL of THE
OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

was affixed in the presence of:

Solicitor / Designated Officer.

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
1. (VARIOUS ROADS - WEST OXFORDSHIRE) (PROHIBITION AND
RESTRICTION OF WAITING AND PERMITTED PARKING) (VARIATION No.*)
ORDER 20**
2. (WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT) (DISABLED PERSONS' PARKING
PLACES) (AMENDMENT No.*) ORDER 20****

NOTICE is given that Oxfordshire County Council proposes to make the above orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and all other enabling powers. The effect of the order – as a result of ‘public realm’ improvements – is to introduce new & amend existing parking & loading restrictions in Witney as follows:

- 1. Waiting & loading restrictions** – ‘No Waiting at Any Time’ (double yellow lines) will be introduced – revoking all existing loading restrictions in the process – on:
- a) High Street (both sides) from its junction with Welch Way, southwards to its a junction with Market Square,
 - b) Market Square (both sides) for its entire length, from its junction with Market Square, southwards to its a junction with Corn Street/Langdale Gate.

Excluded from the lengths above will be any signed/lined Disabled Persons’ Parking Places and designated Bus only & Taxi only Parking Places.

- 2. Disabled Persons Parking Places** – the existing 3 hour time limited bays will be removed, with new full time/unrestricted bays introduced as follows:

- a) High Street (East side):
 - i) from a point 4 metres south of the common boundary of Nos.28 & 30 High Street, southwards for a distance of 19.8 metres, and
 - ii) from a point 1 metre north of the southern wall of No.10 High Street, northwards for a distance of 26.4 metres
- b) Market Square (West side):
 - i) from a point opposite the southern wall of No. 6 Market Square, northwards for a distance of 6.6 metres (located wholly on the footway), and
 - ii) from a point 1 metre south of a point opposite the northern wall of No. 24 Market Square, northwards for a distance of 13.2 metres.

The Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads - West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) Order 2012, and the Oxfordshire County Council (West Oxfordshire District) (Disabled Persons' Parking Places) Order 2006 will be further amended as necessary.

Additionally, the following measures will be introduced as part of the wider highway improvements:

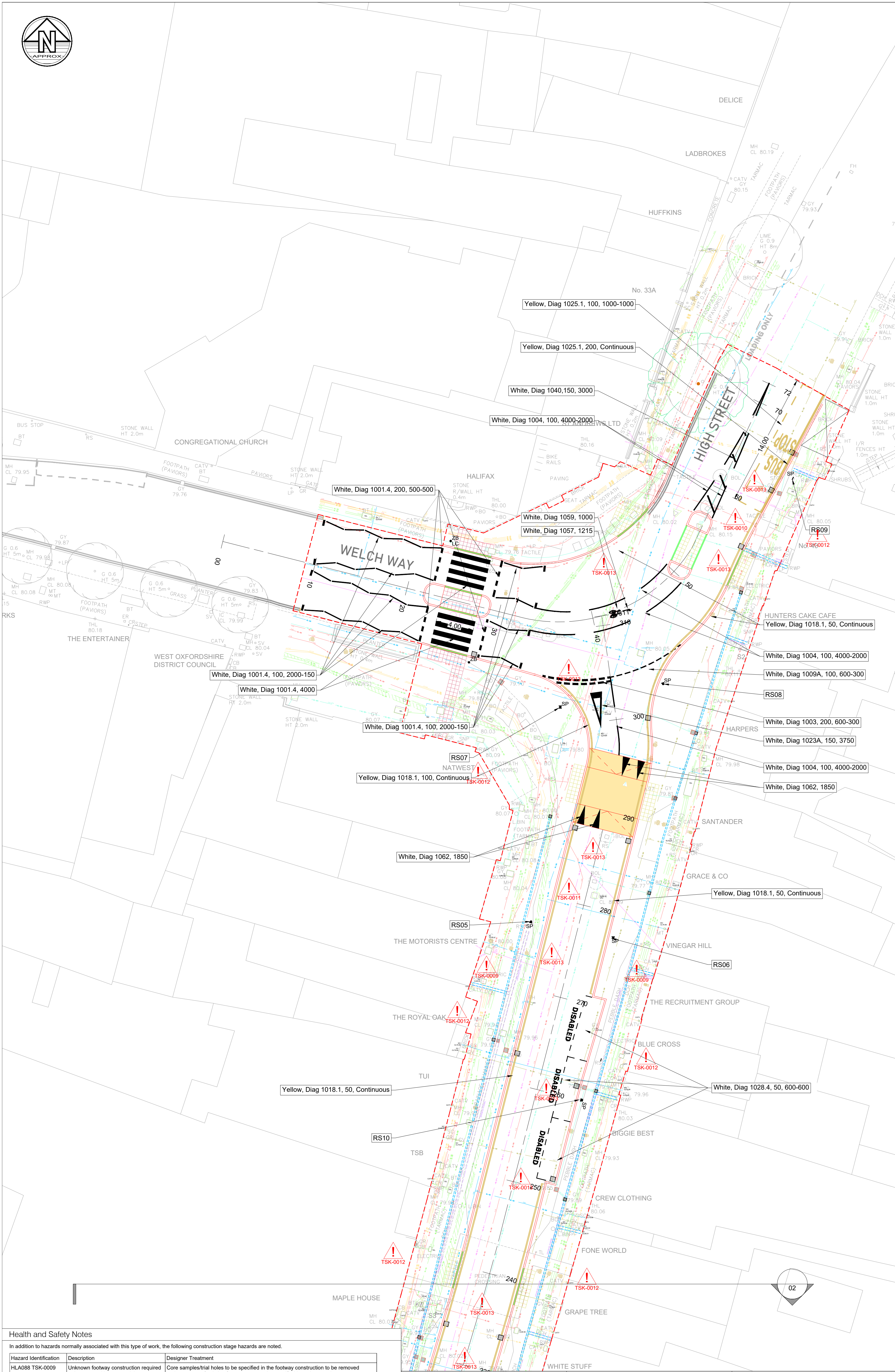
- 3. A new Zebra Crossing** (for pedestrian use only) is proposed on Welch Way (between Natwest Bank & Halifax Building Society) from a point 2 metres west of the western wall of No. 21 Welch Way, eastwards for a distance of 33m.

4. **'No Stopping Except Buses'** (at all times) bays:
 - a) High Street (East side) – from a point approx.20 metres north of its junction with Welch Way, northwards for approx.14 metres,
 - b) Market Square (Both sides) – from a point approx.25 metres north of its junction with Corn Street, northwards for approx.36 metres,
5. **'No stopping except local buses 7am–5pm Mon to Fri & 7am-2pm Sat. Taxis 5pm-7am Monday to Friday, 2pm-Midnight Saturday and all-day Sunday'** bay on Market Square East side – from a point approx.10 metres south of its junction with High Street, southwards for approx.20 metres,
6. **'No Stopping Except Taxis'** (at all times) bay on Market Square (East side) – from a point 20.5 metres south of a point opposite the southern wall of No. 6 Market Square, southward for a distance of 16 metres.
7. **Traffic calming** – new 'Flat top road humps' will be located on High Street:
 - a) from a point opposite the northern boundary of No.34 High Street, southwards for a distance of approx.7m
 - b) from a point approx.2 metres south of the northern boundary of No.22 High Street, southwards for a distance of approx.10m

Documents giving more details of the proposals are available for public inspection online by visiting <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk> Copies may also be made available on request.

Objections to the proposals and other representations specifying the grounds on which they are made may be sent in writing to the address below by the end of **17 October 2025**. The Council will consider objections and representations received in response to this Notice. They may be disseminated widely for these purposes and made available to the public.

Traffic Regulation Order & Schemes (Ref: CM/12.6.410/P0348) for the Director of Environment & Highways, Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND. (Email: christian.mauz@oxfordshire.gov.uk, Telephone: 0345 310 1111).



This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant architects, engineers and specialists drawings and specifications.

Do not scale from this drawing.

KEY:

Line Markings
Colour, TSRGD Ref, Width, Length-Gap
White, Diag 1009, 100, 600-300

Hatch Markings
Colour, TSRGD Ref, Width, Gap
White, Diag 1040, 100, 2000

RS05
Diag, 670 - '20mph Speed Limit'



RS06
Diag, 670 - '20mph Speed Limit'



RS07
Diag, 619 - 'Motor Vehicles Prohibited'
with supporting sign 'Except buses, taxis, loading and disabled badge holders' (Facing North)



Diag, 501 - 'Give Way' (Facing South)



RS08
Diag, 619 - 'Motor Vehicles Prohibited'
with supporting sign 'Except buses, taxis, loading and disabled badge holders'



RS09
'No Stopping Except Buses'
Mounted on existing bus stop flag



RS10
'Disabled Badge Holders Only Parking'



ZB
Diag, 4007 - Yellow globe to indicate presence of zebra crossing

- Layout is based on topographic survey ref. 33463 by MK Surveys
- Services shown are taken from the GPR survey reference 13458-0725-01.
- For services info, including legend, see separate service plan.
- Sign posts to be mounted minimum 500mm from the kerb face
- This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the signage schedule, TSRGD, Traffic Signs Manual and relevant specification appendix for the scheme

Health and Safety Notes

In addition to hazards normally associated with this type of work, the following construction stage hazards are noted.

Hazard Identification	Description	Designer Treatment
HLA088 TSK-0009	Unknown footway construction required to be removed increases risks to construction operatives (e.g. from PAHs, removal of large, heavy flag paving)	Core samples/trial holes to be specified in the footway construction to be removed and treatment of existing footway areas to be specified based on results
HLA088 TSK-0010	Construction of gully connections onto existing surface water sewer at depth means construction workers having to work in deep excavations	Drainage connections to utilise existing gully tails and not require new connections to deeper drainage where possible. CCTV survey undertaken and design amended to reflect.
HLA088 TSK-0011	Placement of planters/benches requiring heavy lifting operations putting construction works at risk.	Investigate procurement of planters/equipment that requires little on site lifting/assembly to reduce this risk.
HLA088 TSK-0012	Shallow services identified by GPR survey in area of footway resurfacing leading to service strikes	Specification of surface treatment that requires minimal excavation above services. Areas highlighted on drawings
HLA088 TSK-0013	Services crossing new kerb lines leading to service strikes	GPR survey indicates the depth of these services. Services highlighted on drawings. Kerb installation details to be developed to require limited excavation

For all identified Design Health and Safety Risks applicable to the scheme, see HLA088-TSK-GEN-ZZ-RA-0001 and the associated hazard plan

TSK CONSULTING

Engineering the Built Environment

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OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL



Project

Witney High Street
Oxfordshire

Drawing Title

Road Markings & Signs
Sheet 3

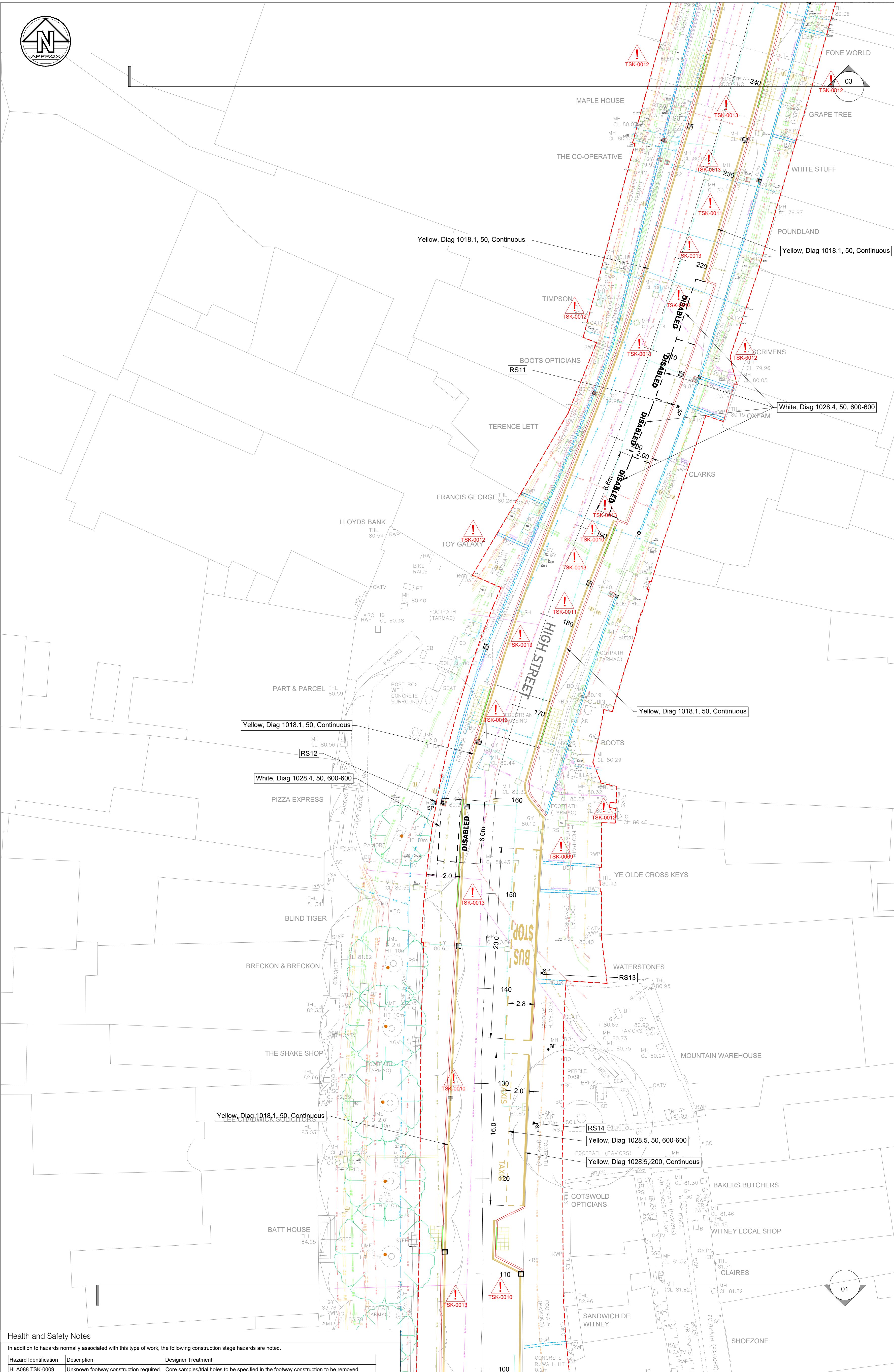
Scale (s) Date Drawn
1:200@A1 July 2025 JB

Drawing Status Revision
S3 P02

Drawing No.

HLA088-TSK-HSN-03-DR-CH-1200

Rev	Date	By	Chk	Description
P02	05.09.25	JB	SC	Sign faces amended
P01	31.07.25	JB	SC	For Information & Comment



This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant architects, engineers and specialists drawings and specifications.

Do not scale from this drawing.

KEY:

Line Markings
Colour, TSRGD Ref, Width, Length-Gap
White, Diag 1009, 100, 600-300

Hatch Markings
Colour, TSRGD Ref, Width, Gap
White, Diag 1040, 100, 2000

RS11
'Disabled Badge Holders Only Parking'



RS12
'Disabled Badge Holders Only Parking'
Mounted to existing post



RS13
'No Stopping Except Local Buses and taxis'



RS14
'No Stopping Except Taxis'



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2. Services shown are taken from the GPR survey reference 13458-0725-01.
3. For services info, including legend, see separate service plan.
4. Sign posts to be mounted minimum 500mm from the kerb face
5. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the signage schedule, TSRGD, Traffic Signs Manual and relevant specification appendix for the scheme

Health and Safety Notes

In addition to hazards normally associated with this type of work, the following construction stage hazards are noted.

Hazard Identification	Description	Designer Treatment
HLA088 TSK-0009	Unknown footway construction required to be removed increases risks to construction operatives (e.g. from PAHs, removal of large, heavy flag paving)	Core samples/trial holes to be specified in the footway construction to be removed and treatment of existing footway areas to be specified based on results
HLA088 TSK-0010	Construction of gully connections onto existing surface water sewer at depth means construction workers having to work in deep excavations	Drainage connections to utilise existing gully tails and not require new connections to deeper drainage where possible. CCTV survey undertaken and design amended to reflect.
HLA088 TSK-0011	Placement of planters/benches requiring heavy lifting operations putting construction works at risk	Investigate procurement of planters/equipment that requires little on site lifting/assembly to reduce this risk.
HLA088 TSK-0012	Shallow services identified by GPR survey in area of footway resurfacing leading to service strikes	Specification of surface treatment that requires minimal excavation above services. Areas highlighted on drawings
HLA088 TSK-0013	Services crossing new kerb lines leading to service strikes	GPR survey indicates the depth of these services. Services highlighted on drawings. Kerb installation details to be developed to require limited excavation

For all identified Design Health and Safety Risks applicable to the scheme, see HLA088-TSK-GEN-ZZ-RA-0001 and the associated hazard plan

Rev	Date	By	Chk	Description
P02	05.09.25	JB	SC	Sign faces amended
P01	31.07.25	JB	SC	For Information & Comment

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TSK



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

GallifordTry

Project

Witney High Street
Oxfordshire

Drawing Title

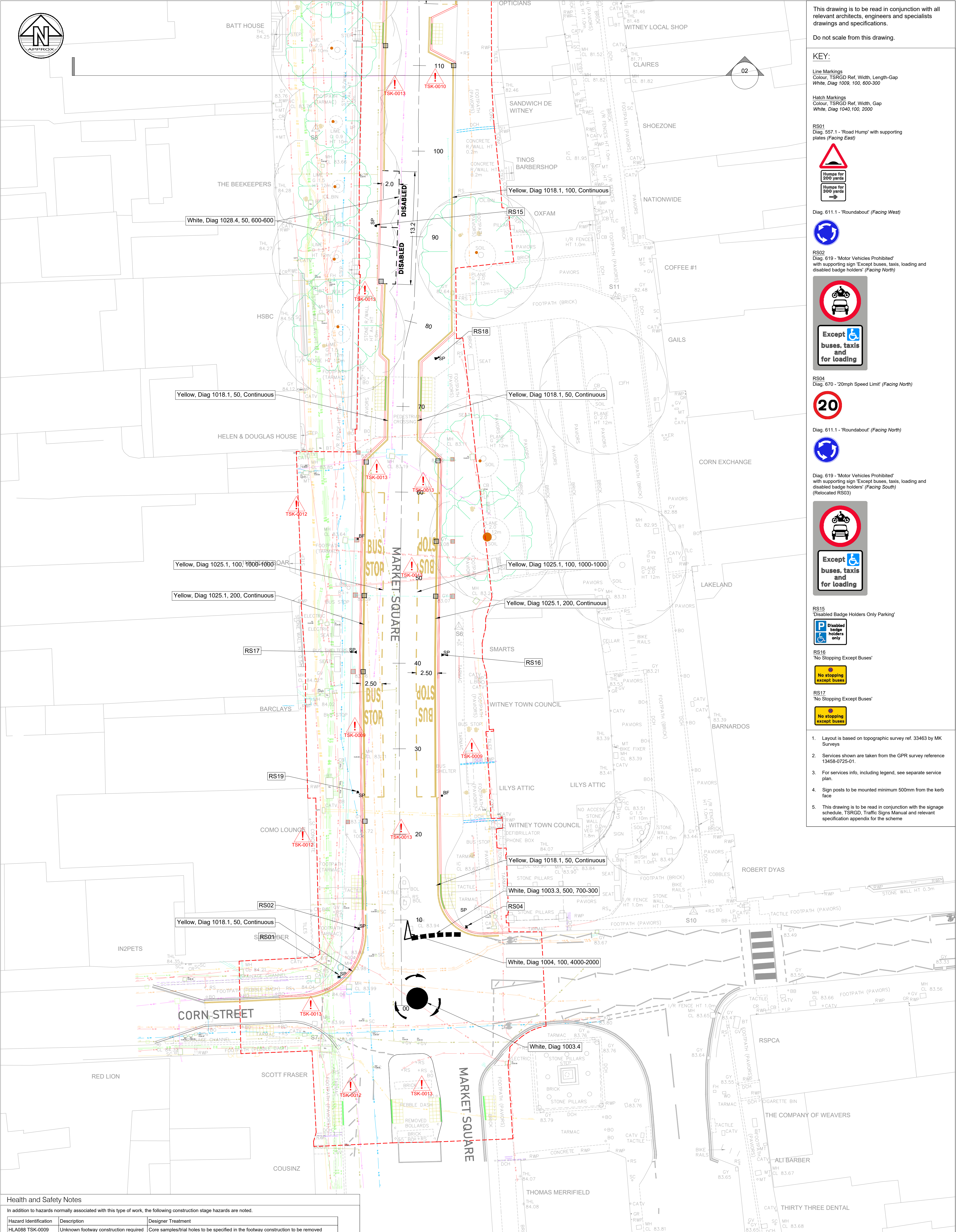
Road Markings & Signs
Sheet 2

Scale (s) Date Drawn
1:200@A1 July 2025 JB

Drawing Status Revision
S3 P02

Drawing No.

HLA088-TSK-HSN-02-DR-CH-1200



Health and Safety Notes		
In addition to hazards normally associated with this type of work, the following construction stage hazards are noted.		
Hazard Identification	Description	Designer Treatment
HLA088 TSK-0009	Unknown footway construction required to be removed increases risks to construction operatives (e.g. from PAHs, removal of large, heavy flag paving)	Core samples/trial holes to be specified in the footway construction to be removed and treatment of existing footway areas to be specified based on results
HLA088 TSK-0010	Construction of gully connections onto existing surface water sewer at depth means construction workers having to work in deep excavations	Drainage connections to utilise existing gully tails and not require new connections to deeper drainage where possible. CCTV survey undertaken and design amended to reflect.
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HLA088 TSK-0013	Services crossing new kerb lines leading to service strikes	GPR survey indicates the depth of these services. Services highlighted on drawings. Kerb installation details to be developed to require limited excavation

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Rev	Date	By	Chk	Description
P02	05.09.25	JB	SC	Sign Faces Updated
P01	31.07.25	JB	SC	For Information & Comment

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TSK

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

GallifordTry

Project

Witney High Street
Oxfordshire

Drawing Title

Road Markings & Signs

Sheet 1

Scale (s)

1:200@A1

Date

July 2025

Drawn

JB

Drawing Status

S3

Revision

P02

Drawing No.

HLA088-TSK-HSN-01-DR-CH-1200

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Do not scale from this drawing.

KEY:

Line Markings
Colour, TSRGD Ref, Width, Length-Gap
White, Diag 1009, 100, 600-300

Hatch Markings
Colour, TSRGD Ref, Width, Gap
White, Diag 1040, 100, 2000

RS01
Diag. 557.1 - 'Road Hump' with supporting plates (Facing East)



Diag. 611.1 - 'Roundabout' (Facing West)



RS02
Diag. 619 - 'Motor Vehicles Prohibited' with supporting sign 'Except buses, taxis, loading and disabled badge holders' (Facing North)



RS04
Diag. 670 - '20mph Speed Limit' (Facing North)



Diag. 611.1 - 'Roundabout' (Facing North)



Diag. 619 - 'Motor Vehicles Prohibited' with supporting sign 'Except buses, taxis, loading and disabled badge holders' (Facing South) (Relocated RS03)



RS15
'Disabled Badge Holders Only Parking'



RS16
'No Stopping Except Buses'



RS17
'No Stopping Except Buses'



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FULL COUNCIL



Agenda Item:	Civic Announcements
Meeting Date:	Monday 6 October 2025
Contact Officer:	Secretary to the Mayor

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.

Supporting the Community

Cogges Beer & Cider Festival – Cogges Manor Farm

Speaking at Rotary Club meeting Blue Boar Witney

Witney Wellbeing Day with 'Tough to Talk' – Langdale Hall Witney

Aspire Witney Hub Art Exhibition – Corn Exchange

Witney bus users meeting- Corn Exchange

Fund raising event for Chair of WODC – Oasis Café – attended by Deputy Mayor

Witney Swimming Club fundraising Swimathon – Carterton Leisure Centre

Life Changing Bakery launch party Yellow Submarine charity

Apollos Clothing new premises opening

Witney Lions Club defibrillator opening – Cogges Surgery

Witney In Pink 25th anniversary judging

Witney Area Fair Trade Action Group fair trade event – Deputy Mayor attended

TWC Home Improvements store opening – Deputy Mayor attended

Representing and Promoting Witney

Civic Service – St Mary's Church

Gallopers Service and Blessing – The Leys

Lord Lieutenant's Oxfordshire Awards evening

Key Events and Council Activity

Meeting Rev Dr Hester Jones

V J Day events - Town Cry and Flag Raising, wreath laying, re dedication of memorial bench for Arthur Titherington – also attended by Deputy Mayor
Commonwealth War Graves walk and refreshments, Tower Hill cemetery and chapel
VJ Day Civic Service – St Mary’s Church

100th birthday celebration for Dennis Bishop – Corn Exchange – also attended by Deputy Mayor

Merchant Navy Day flag raising

Battle of Britain flag raising

Raising Funds -Mayor’s Charities 2025-26:

Mayor’s charities: Apollos Clothing, Witney Food Bank

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



Agenda Item: Health and Safety Report

Meeting Date: Monday 6 October 2025

Contact Officer: Compliance and Environment Officer

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, Members are reminded that they have a collective responsibility for the Health & Safety of the organisation.

The current Health & Safety Policy document will be reviewed this year to identify any amendments and actions necessary, and this will be completed with GH Safety Ltd (part of Opus Safety) the Council's Health and Safety Consultant.

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

Compliance Inspection, Testing and Servicing Status	Corn Exchange	Town Hall	Admin Office	Burwell Hall	Windrush Ind. Est. Temp Works Depot	Stanley Court Temp Works Depot
Fire Risk Assessment	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Fire Alarm Testing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Landlord	N/A
Fire Extinguishers	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Steel fire exit staircase	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Emergency Lighting	Completed	Completed	Due	Completed	N/A	Completed
Security	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	N/A	N/A
Lift	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gas Safety	Completed	N/A	N/A	Completed	N/A	N/A
Electrical Periodic	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Landlord	Landlord
PAT Testing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Legionella Risk Assessment	Review	Completed	Completed	Completed	Landlord	Landlord
Asbestos	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Report provided with Lease.
Air Handling Unit	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Air conditioning	N/A	N/A	N/A	Completed	N/A	N/A

Emergency Plan

As part of the comprehensive review of the Council's Emergency Plan, a meeting was convened with Emergency Planning Officers from West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and Resilience Team officers from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). The objective of this engagement was to gain a detailed understanding of the procedures, systems, and best practices employed by both authorities in emergency planning and response.

The meeting proved highly beneficial, providing valuable insights and guidance that are informing the development of the revised Emergency Plan.

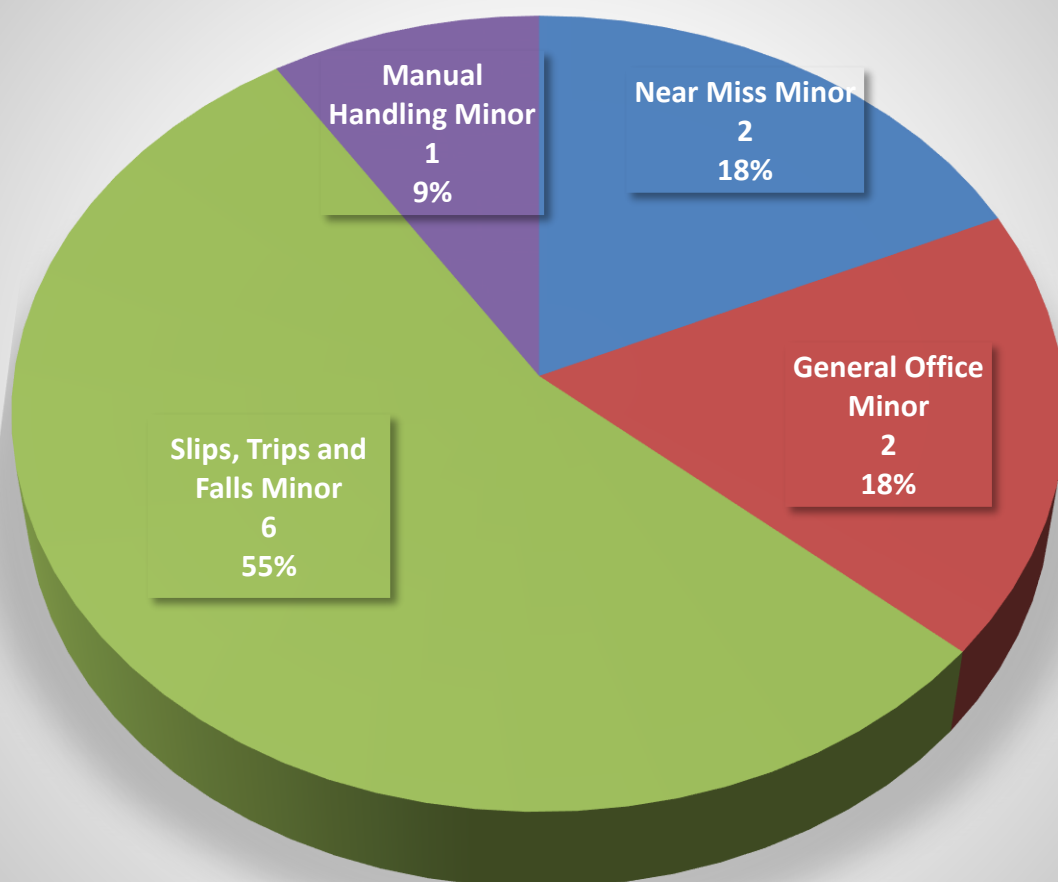
The updated Emergency Plan is currently in draft form. Once completed, it will be circulated to relevant officers at WODC and OCC for review and comment. Their feedback will be considered prior to the Plan being formally presented to Council for approval.

In parallel, the review process will also encompass an evaluation of the Council's out-of-hours emergency call handling arrangements. This assessment aims to ensure that the Council's response capabilities remain robust, responsive, and fit for purpose.

Health and Safety incidents

- RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)
 - No reportable incidents.
- Accidents/Incident
 - There have been two reported accidents/incidents since the last meeting relating to members of the public using the Council's facilities.
 - Slips, trips and falls - Minor.
 - a customer using the Café
 - an adult using the Splash Park
- Near Miss
 - There has been one reported near miss since the last meeting. This relates to a collapsed tomb stone within St Mary's Churchyard. The Operations Team have made the tomb stone safe.

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/Anti-Social Behaviour

29 Jul – 6 Oct 2025

Date	Item/Location	Date/Time/Who Reported	Cost if known	Action	Police Reference
11/08	Graffiti of Signs at Mill Meadow	B&GSO	£30	Removed by Ranger	DP-21349-25-4343-00
11/08	Graffiti of COVID Memorial	Dep Town Clerk	£60	Removed by Works Team	DP-21352-25-4343-00
11/08	Bench stolen at Tiny Forest	B&GSO	£50	Retrieved by TVP on patrol. Secured fixed by Works Team	43250411762
12/08	Spray paint applied to COVID Memorial Bench Plaque	Ops Manager	£90	Removed by Works Team	43250421642
13/08	Extensive Graffiti of Covid Memorial	Ops Manager	£150	Removed by Works Team	43250421642
14/08	Mill Meadow anti-social behaviour – Fire setting & Littering at the “drop In”	Resident	N/A		Was Reported – Ref not noted.
15/08	Dalia’s stolen from four planting sites at The Leys	Ops Manager	£200	Not able to replace- Pots will remain bare	43250421667
17/08	Spray paint on sign(s) 3 Life rings thrown in lake – one missing. 15 road pins stolen	B&GSO	Road Pins £40 Life Ring £40	Spray paint removed by Ranger. Replacement equipment purchased	43250421607
19/08	Damage to St Marys Wall – Stones removed.	Senior Admin	£100	Repair to be made by Works Team	43250425436
20/08	Toddler multi-play vandalised	Ops Manager	£500	Replacement Required	DP-22109-25-4343-00
21/08	Lectern Sign at Mill Meadow	B&GSO	£1,500	Sign broken and unrepairable. Removed and replacement being considered due to cost.	DP-22266-25-4343-00

21/08	Tresspass on The Leys Black Forest Equipment	Public	N/A	Resident reported to TVP as a public order offence - Tresspass onto equipment, climbed barriers and abused residents when challenged	43250428497
28/08	Life ring thrown in River Windrush	Ranger	N/A	Retrieved and reinstated	BCA-63211-25-4343-00
28/08	Information post removed from ground	Ranger	N/A	Retrieved and reset	BCA-63211-25-4343-00
01/09	COVID Memorial Graffiti	Dep Town Clerk	£35	Cleaned by Works Team	No
02/09	COVID Memorial Graffiti	Public	£35	Cleaned by Works Team	No
05/09	Human faecal matter and urine deposited in dog waste bin at Burwell	Ops Manager	N/A	Dog Bin removed and signage to advise	N/A
15/09	"67" Graffiti Tag at County Park Lake Area	B&GSO	£30	Officer time to clean	43250473282
16/09	Rubbing post at Country Park – Axe Attack	B&GSO	£69	Officer time to repair and replacement rubbing sign	43250475605
24/9	Ground matting ripped up from witches hat play item at The Leys	Ops Manager	£500.00	Extensive work to dig our area and reset	
24/9	Fencing ripped down from the black forest play tower at The Leys	Ops Manager	£100	Two panels damaged that were on hire	

Cost can include replacement items or an approximation of additional staffing costs.

FULL COUNCIL



Agenda Item: Future of Local Government in Oxfordshire

Meeting Date: Monday 6 October 2025

Contact Officer: Town Clerk/CEO – Sharon Groth

The purpose of this report is to update Members on developments regarding the future of local government in Oxfordshire since the last Full Council meeting held on 28 July 2025.

Background

The government continues to explore opportunities for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution across England. Oxfordshire is not currently in the “priority programme” for reorganisation, meaning its timeline is aligned with the longer-term programme (as shown in the attached LGIU LGR timeline – right-hand column).

The Council has previously agreed to remain engaged in discussions to ensure that the voice of Witney residents and the parish sector is represented as proposals evolve.

Current Situation

A previous Council resolution (Minute No. 373, 23rd June 2025) instructed the Town Clerk to engage with all three local authorities regarding the proposed restructures for local government in Oxfordshire. Accordingly, two emails have been received from WODC and Oxford City Council, while Oxfordshire County Council opted to arrange an in-person meeting with the Town Clerk to discuss its proposal in greater detail.

Since the last meeting, the following activity has taken place:

4th August 2025 – Parish Forum Meeting with West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC):

A presentation on the two-unitary proposal for Oxfordshire was given. Parish representatives participated in a workshop exercise designed to answer specific questions and help shape potential solutions around local service delivery challenges identified by the parish sector.

15th August 2025 – Meeting with Oxfordshire County Council Team:

Discussions centred on how the Oxfordshire Charter could influence and shape the one-unitary proposal, ahead of a planned wider workshop. A preliminary conversation was also

held regarding larger assets that Witney Town Council could potentially take on, and the implications of such transfers.

1st September 2025 – OCC Workshop on Parish Framework:

OCC held a further workshop with Town and Parish Councils to support development of a parish framework within its LGR proposal. As the workshop was held on the same evening as the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting, no Council Officers were able to attend. A supporting paper has been produced by OCC officers, but it is not currently available for wider circulation.

17th September 2025 – Meeting with Inner Circle Consulting (on behalf of Oxford City Council):

The focus of this meeting was to discuss the concept of Neighbourhood Boards, exploring what these could look like in practice and how the parish sector might play a role in their governance and operation.

The Town Clerk will continue to co-operate and participate in discussions and workshops as opportunities arise.

At this stage, Members are also referred to the item within Correspondence – an open letter from Cllr Keith Stevens, the outgoing Chair of NALC, entitled *“Seizing the Opportunity of Devolution.”* Members are asked to take note of the important message conveyed by Cllr Stevens regarding the future role of the parish and town council sector in shaping local government and delivering local services.

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: Future proposals will need to ensure fair representation for all communities, particularly where governance arrangements may affect local decision-making.

b) Biodiversity: No direct implications at this stage.

c) Crime & Disorder: No direct implications at this stage.

d) Environment & Climate Emergency: Reorganisation may provide opportunities to rationalise service delivery and reduce duplication, with potential sustainability benefits.

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.

Uncertainty remains regarding the preferred model of governance and the eventual government decision on Oxfordshire's position. Risks include potential changes to local service responsibilities, asset management, and funding streams. Ongoing engagement with District, County and City partners helps to mitigate these risks, although the Council itself has no control over the eventual outcome, hence why engagement and discussions are key at this stage of the process.

Social Value

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

By actively engaging in discussions with WODC, OCC and consultants on behalf of Oxford City Council, the Town Council ensures the parish sector is represented and helps shape governance models that prioritise strong local democracy and community benefit.

Financial implications

None directly arising from this update.

However, depending on the outcome of LGR, there may be future implications for asset transfer, service responsibilities, and funding arrangements.

Recommendations

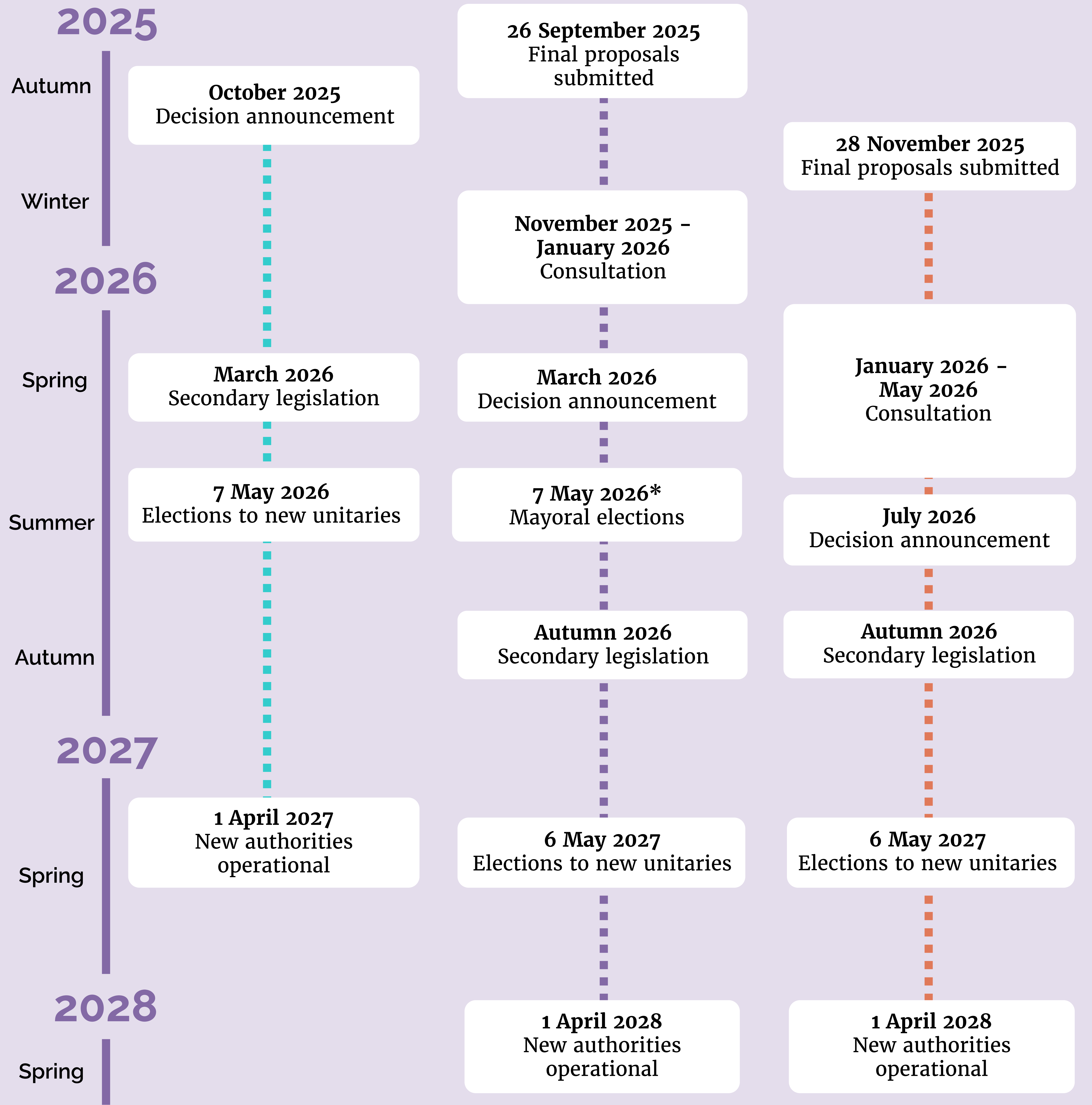
Members are invited to note the report and agrees that the Town Clerk continues to engage with District, County, City and parish sector partners to ensure Witney Town Council's interests are represented in ongoing discussions.

LGR Timeline

SURREY

DEVOLUTION PRIORITY PROGRAMME

ALL OTHER TWO-TIER AREAS



*Although most of the Devolution Priority Programme are due to have inaugural mayoral elections in May 2026, Cumbria and Cheshire and Warrington will have their inaugural mayoral elections in May 2027.

From: Phil Martin <phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk>
Sent: 30 July 2025 18:09
To: Sharon Groth <sharon.groth@witney-tc.gov.uk>; Astrid Harvey <Astrid.Harvey@westoxon.gov.uk>
Cc: Town Clerk <townclerk@witney-tc.gov.uk>; Loraine Harwood <loraine.harwood@witney-tc.gov.uk>; Phil Martin <Phil.Martin@WESTOXON.GOV.UK>
Subject: RE: Local Government Reorganisation: Two Unitary Council's for Oxfordshire

Good evening Sharon,

Thanks for your email regarding the development of a Two Unitary Authority proposal for Local Government Reorganisation for Oxfordshire. We are currently at the early stage of proposal development, and therefore it is not possible to give definitive answers to how the proposed Oxford and the Shires Unitary Model would impact Witney Town Council with regard to:

- The delivery and potential transfer of services currently provided by principal authorities;
- The financial implications for town and parish councils;
- The mechanisms proposed for engaging with local councils in the future governance structure.

That said, we are committed to developing a credible and compelling case for a Two Unitary Authority structure for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire to inform the Secretary of State's decision over which structure should be implemented for our County.

Based on the current government timetable the Secretary of State will make a decision following formal consultation this time next year, after which all the Councils across Oxfordshire will begin working to implement the structure that will include consideration of each the outcomes set out in your email and the point at which each of these will be known, either during the term of the Shadow Authority (from April 2027) or the new Unitary Authority (from April 2028):

1. Clear financial arrangements for any devolved services, including sustainable funding and fair transitional support.
2. Formal service level agreements ensuring that any transferred services come with appropriate resources, guidance, and accountability.
3. A defined role for town and parish councils within any new governance framework, particularly in the delivery of place-based services.
4. Representation in strategic planning processes that directly affect our community.
5. Support for capacity-building, training, and infrastructure to manage any increased responsibilities effectively.
6. Continued commitment to partnership working, recognising the strengths and knowledge of local councils in delivering locally responsive services.

This will require on-going engagement with all Town and Parish Council's across the District. At the point where decisions over implementation require input from specific localities we will engage directly with the Town or Parish Council for that geography.

I would encourage you, colleagues and Cllrs from the Town Council to attend the Local Government Reorganisation event we have arranged for Town and Parish Councils on 4th August 6.30 – 8pm that is being hosted in the Council Chamber at Woodgreen (please see invitation attached) as this will give you and peers an opportunity to feed into the Two Unitary Authority proposal at this early stage of its development.

Kind regards

Phil and Astrid

Phil Martin
Director of Place



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.westoxon.gov.uk

From: lgr <lgr@oxford.gov.uk>

Sent: 28 August 2025 09:54

To: Sharon Groth <sharon.groth@witney-tc.gov.uk>

Subject: Re: Local Government Reorganisation: A Three Unitary proposal - Greater Oxford

Dear Sharon

thank you for your enquiry about our LGR proposals. We are working through the detail on our proposals, and we take on board your points about the clarity you would like to see on key aspect of your work in the new structures. Thank you for setting this out so clearly at this stage when we can factor these in to our future thinking.

In response to your questions about transfer of services, financial implications, and future governance, we are clear that the current role of town and parish councils delivers on important priorities for local communities, and we want to see that continue. We are still working through the detail on this level of local service delivery and you will see more clarity in our proposal in the autumn.

We believe local government should be well connected to the communities it serves, and that is a key part of the rationale for three smaller unitary councils. Smaller unitary councils are more able to respond to local need, and the voices of communities - through bodies like town and parish councils - are more easily heard when there are fewer competing interests.

We are developing proposals for Neighbourhood Area Committees in the three unitary model, which would provide stronger area representation within the new democratic structures. These are expected to include ward members for a grouping of wards, and other community representatives like town councils are also expected to be involved. The exact mechanisms, powers, funding, etc are still being considered, and we would want to work with town and parish councils on the detail of how these could work.

I hope this gives your confidence on the importance we place on local governance and delivery in our three unitary proposal. If you would like to discuss these issues further we would be happy to meet with you in September, please let me know what availability you have in the first part of the month.

kind regards

Emma Jackman

Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

27 AUGUST 2025

OPEN LETTER: SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY OF DEVOLUTION

In my final open letter as the chair of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) before my term ends in December, I want to thank everyone for their service, reflect on some achievements over the last four years, and issue a call to action on devolution.

First and foremost, my sincere thanks to everyone who works within and in partnership with parish and town councils nationwide. Your hard work, tireless dedication, and unwavering commitment continue to make a real difference to communities and build a stronger, fairer, and more resilient society.

I want to congratulate all new and returning councillors elected this May. You are all part of a hugely successful, effective and growing community tier of government — more than 100,000 councillors investing over 14 million hours a year, and collectively stewarding around £2 billion in resources to improve lives and give people a voice. I wish you every success in the years ahead.

As a passionate advocate of learning and networking, I encourage every councillor — both new and experienced — to make the most of the training and development opportunities offered by your county association. Alongside this, NALC continues to provide national resources that will help you in your role, such as The Good Councillor's Guide series and recently updated Local Councils Explained. Please create your account on our new website, unlocking further benefits of membership that will strengthen your council, including free access to thousands of resources such as advice notes, publications, and campaign materials.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve you as the chair of your national body for the last four years. Indeed, there are so many achievements during my tenure, of which I am incredibly proud. From working to develop positive relationships with principal authorities and their representative bodies, including the Local Government Association, to raising the profile of the sector among parliamentarians from all political parties. Conveying the importance of our sector to the government and parliament, delivering tangible policy like freedom from council tax referendums, commitments to allow councils to meet remotely and strengthen the standards regimes, changes to Martyn's Law and the audit regime, and millions of pounds in government funding for community assets, neighbourhood planning and local projects. Ensuring parish and town councils are

recognised as having a key role in local government reorganisation and devolution, with consideration being given to creating more across England. Please read our Annual Report 2024/25 for more details. But none of this would be possible without your support, and the support of NALC staff and county associations.

As I look to the future, I am convinced that this is a crucial moment for local democracy and community leadership. The government's devolution and local government reform agenda is advancing across England, with new structures and powers emerging in strategic authorities, city-regions, and counties. It is not simply about shifting powers from Whitehall to regional mayors or county leaders. Devolution must be about putting decision-making closer to people, empowering communities to shape the places where they live and work. As the community tier of local government, parish and town councils are uniquely placed to make this vision a reality, to help make a success of devolution.

Already, parish and town councils are delivering services, enabling housing, stewarding green spaces, supporting local economies, driving climate action, and fostering civic pride. But the potential is far greater, and we can do so much more. Devolution offers us the chance to have a greater say over priorities in our areas, take on new responsibilities where we have the ambition and capacity, and work in partnership with other tiers of government to deliver more for our residents.

That is why I am calling on every parish and town council to:

- Engage proactively with principal authorities and combined authorities to make your voice heard in devolution discussions, advocating for a clear role for parish and town councils in new governance arrangements, funding, and service delivery.
- Demonstrate leadership and ambition to showcase the difference you already make, and set out bold visions for your community under a devolved settlement.
- Collaborate with neighbouring councils by working together, so we can strengthen our collective voice and develop proposals that reflect shared priorities and local needs.
- Invest in and strengthen your capacity by building the skills, resources, and partnerships needed to play a greater role and thrive in a devolved landscape.

NALC remains fully committed to championing the role of parish and town councils in this new era. We will continue to work nationally to influence policy

and work with county associations to support you with resources, training, and advocacy. It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. The more we do now, the greater our chances of ensuring effective engagement and relationships with new structures that parish and town councils are not only part of the conversation but at the heart of England's future devolved governance. Together, we can build stronger, more empowered communities.

Thank you again for the honour of serving as your chair.

Cllr Keith Stevens
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Stevens', with a long, sweeping horizontal line underneath it.

CIVILITY AND RESPECT PROJECT



WELCOME TO
THE CIVILITY
AND RESPECT
PROJECT
NEWSLETTER

CIVILITY AND RESPECT - CAN YOU HELP?

How can we increase the number of councils signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge?

18% of councils (1,832) have signed up to the Pledge! The Improvement and Development Board (IDB): Civility and Respect (C&R) Taskforce knows this is a significant achievement.

Work has started on promoting the Pledge to small and micro-councils which make up over 65% of all councils. Analysis to date has also shown that there are significant variations between different geographical areas and work is ongoing to understand why this is the case.

The taskforce wants to get the majority of the councils to sign up to the Pledge. To achieve this goal, they would like to get a much better understanding of why councils are not signing up.

Please email Hazel.Broatch@nalc.gov.uk with your suggestions about how you think the taskforce could help to significantly increase the number of councils signing up to the Pledge. Please ensure you give her your contact details as the taskforce may wish to talk with you about your suggestions.

Councillor's Statement of Assurance

The taskforce also wants to continuously improve civility and respect, and has learnt that research has identified a combination of individual and group pledges is ideal so that people can hold each other accountable while also taking personal responsibility.

IDB has recently approved the taskforce's recommendation that a 'Councillor's Statement of Assurance' be introduced. This has already been done in Cornwall.

The goal is that each councillor will be asked to sign up as an individual to the recommended 'Councillor's Statement of Assurance'.

By signing up, the councillor would take personal responsibility for C&R. This would be combined with the council signing up to the Pledge (if it has not already done so) and taking group responsibility.

Please look out for the launch of the 'Councillor's Statement of Assurance' in September 2025.

Governance Checklist

The taskforce wants to thank Linda Larter MBE FSLCC for the work she has put into producing the Governance Checklist. This will be available on the C&R pages on both the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) website and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) website. The checklist will be a valuable resource that councils can use to ensure that they comply with governance requirements.

Sharing our experience

Steve Trice, Chair of the C&R Taskforce, has been sharing our sector's experience and learning with Compassion in Politics who are promoting a pledge for MPs in The House of Commons. He was delighted to be of help. It is very rewarding that our sector is leading the way in promoting C&R through asking councils to sign up to the C&R Pledge.

Continuous improvement

Please help the taskforce and email your thoughts and suggestions on how to increase the number of councils signing up to the Pledge. Also, please do not hesitate to send any other ideas you have to improve C&R to Hazel.Broatch@nalc.gov.uk and she will take them to the taskforce for their consideration.

Please visit our dedicated civility and respect pages for lots more information and support

[SLCC | Civility and Respect Project](#) and [NALC | Civility and Respect Project](#)

Ms Sharon Groth
Witney Town Council

Paul Fermer
Director of Environment &
Highways
Oxfordshire County Council
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND

11th September 2025

Dear Ms Sharon Groth,

Many thanks for sharing the results of the Witney 2025 Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey, this is a very useful barometer of how the public sector is perceived and helpful to identify areas where residents' expectations are not being met. I have circulated the information to a number of teams across Oxfordshire to share the key findings with them to follow up.

I sincerely apologise for the extended delay in responding to you whilst we completed our investigations and drafted responses. Please find below our replies to your queries.

Footpaths, Accessibility & Maintenance

- Witney's pavements and footpaths are in poor condition — uneven, overgrown, muddy, and unsafe for people with mobility issues, wheelchair users, and pushchairs.
- Paths in areas like High Street, Burwell, Deer Park Road, Church Green, and Woodford Way need repairs.

Regarding the condition of pavements around Witney Town, high-traffic areas such as the High Street and Church are subject to monthly inspections. All other locations mentioned are included in our statutory 12-month inspection cycle, which is scheduled to take place between September and October this year. Any issues identified, such as vegetation overgrowth, debris, or surface deterioration that meet the criteria outlined in our Highway Safety Inspection Policy will be investigated and addressed accordingly.

In addition, Church Green and the footways within Deer Park are included in this financial year's programme for long-term treatment. Planned works include full reconstruction and footway slurry surfacing to improve durability and accessibility. For further details, please refer to our planned maintenance map at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/roadworks/planned-road-maintenance>. The map also highlights other scheduled projects across the county, including roads, street lighting, bridges, footways, and cycleways.

- Overgrown hedges and grass verges not maintained regularly; complaints via FixMyStreet often unresolved.

In relation to grass verge maintenance, our current policy provides for one cut per year. The scheduling for verge cutting across Oxfordshire is coordinated county-wide, and details for each area can be found on our local website: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/street-maintenance-z/verges>. Please note that West Oxfordshire District Council is responsible for grass cutting in all residential areas within 20mph and 30mph speed limit

zones, while Oxfordshire County Council manages grass cutting in rural areas outside of these speed restrictions. West Oxfordshire District Council has recently adjusted its grass cutting schedule to better align with Oxfordshire County Council's policy. As a result, the reduced frequency may have become more noticeable to residents.

We are sorry to hear that recent reports submitted via Fix My Street have not met expectations. Please note that not all issues, particularly those related to overgrown hedges fall under the direct responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council. In many cases, boundary hedgerows are privately owned, and it becomes necessary for us to contact the adjacent landowner, as they are responsible for maintaining their vegetation. As a result, resolving these types of issues can require additional time and resources.

1. More accessible and year-round walking routes needed, especially between Cogges, Witney Country Park, and Madley Park.

We support the need for more accessible and year-round walking routes across Witney, as outlined in the [Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#). A number of new routes between Cogges and the town centre have been secured through the planning obligations for the East Witney Strategic Development Area and will be delivered as the development builds out. We have also secured active travel funding to improve the route from Madley park to Oxford Hill via Woodbank which is undergoing engineering design at the moment, along side planned improvements to the west of Witney at Deer Park Road for improved surface to the bridleway linking Windrush Place and Deer Park Road where new crossings will be installed.

- Path lighting is insufficient in some areas, making evening routes feel unsafe, especially for women.

As far as the street lighting team are aware, the only issue with path lighting in Witney area that involves streetlighting is within the Leys Recreation Ground off Station Lane, specifically near the tennis courts and skateboard park are located. Please advise if there are other areas with the existing highway street lighting of concern and where those might be located.

We understand that Witney Town Council have had have an ongoing project working on a new/major update to the pavilion within the Leys Recreation Park. Unfortunately, the developer has had the power supply removed to the pavilion. This removal has also impacted on the streetlights and CCTV within the park. Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) are aware of the situation and is actively working to restore power once the mains power supply is replaced/installed. Oxfordshire County Council is monitoring the situation and will follow up with SSEN if there are any updates at our next meeting. However, if Witney Town Council can advise of any proposed completion dates of these works that would be really appreciated.

Potholes, Roads & Infrastructure

- Persistent complaints about potholes throughout Witney and surrounding villages (e.g. Church area, A40, Woodstock Road, Witan Way).
- Roads and signage are poorly maintained and in need of repair.

With regards to pothole, we encourage reports to be submitted through the Fix My Street (FMS) portal. This platform ensures that the information reaches the correct team for investigation. When reporting, please include detailed location information and, if possible, recent photos. This will greatly assist our team in identifying and addressing the issue efficiently. I can confirm that the pathway through the Church is scheduled for a footway slurry treatment to be completed by November this year. In addition, the A40, Woodstock Road, and Witan Way are inspected regularly. Any defects or issues that meet the criteria outlined in our Highway Safety Inspection Policy are addressed accordingly.

For more information on highway repairs and our risk assessment process, please visit the Oxfordshire County Council website:
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/street-maintenance-z/road-repairs>

- Drains not cleared regularly – calls to lobby Oxfordshire County Council to address this.

Oxfordshire County Council has recently committed an additional £1.5 million to enhance its highway drainage operations, marking a significant shift in its approach to gully emptying and surface water management. This investment, approved as part of the 2025–26 budget, aims to transition from a four-year cleansing cycle to an annual programme that will cover all 145,000 roadside gullies, manholes, and catchpits across the county.

Traffic & Enforcement & Traffic

- Insufficient enforcement of High Street Road closure — regularly ignored without consequence.

Since the limited access traffic regulation order (TRO) was implemented on High Street, Witney the county council has been monitoring traffic flows using the road. Poor adherence to the TRO led to a Cabinet Member Decision being taken to implement an enforcement camera to proactively enforce the restriction. The plan and timescales to implement the camera are being finalised and delivery is expected this financial year.

The councils Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan seek to ensure safe routes to school and the councils travel plans team works directly with schools to identify measures that can improve safety. A number of improvements are in train, including the improvements to the path from Oxford Hill to Woodbank to aid trips to the schools in that area; a funding agreement is being pursued between OCC and WTC for a path a King George V Field, and the planned crossings at Deer Park Road will also help in making journeys to school safer. The council is in the process for confirming funding for a further crossing at Witan Way near Sainsburys also. As always suggestions on where further improvements are needed are always welcomed and the Traffic Advisory Committee is a positive forum for discussing these matters.

- Calls for on-the-spot fines and more traffic wardens, especially to manage illegal/bad parking on Bridge Street, Mill Street, and Lower High Street

The council's current enforcement contracts only allow for a finite level of resource which can be deployed at any one time across the County. The council works with its enforcement contractor to ensure efficient and effective deployment of both on-foot and mobile civil enforcement officers. However, the council does have flexibility to carry out targeted deployment for short periods where concerns are raised about compliance with the restrictions. Complaints are taken seriously, and the council's civil enforcement team will review the points raised with our enforcement contractor to see whether further improvements can be made.

Meanwhile, the civil enforcement team have requested our parking contractors, to deploy a civil enforcement officer to the area to ascertain the parking situation. If a vehicle is observed parked in breach of the restrictions in place, after an observation time a Penalty Charge Notice will be issued. However, if you continue having problems with vehicles contravening the parking restrictions you may report any illegally parked vehicles using the online web form, which is monitored daily by our parking contractors. The link is <https://service.oxfordshire.gov.uk/reportparkedvehicle>

High Street & Traffic

- Strong criticism of High Street closure — seen as a mistake with lack of public consultation.

I would like to clarify that the decision to implement a Traffic regulation Order to restrict access at Witney High Street and the 20mph zones across Witney were not taken without due process. Oxfordshire County Council followed all relevant statutory procedures, including a formal public consultation and a Cabinet Member decision. The consultation process was open to all stakeholders and included opportunities for residents, businesses, and other interested parties to provide feedback. The decision to proceed with these schemes was made following careful consideration of the consultation responses, alongside technical assessments. These decisions were made in accordance with the Council's governance framework. While the council acknowledges not all parties agreed with the outcome, the process was transparent and compliant with statutory requirements. There are no plans to reverse these decisions, as they are considered to have led to the positive outcomes envisaged at the early stages of design.

With regard to comments that weekend traffic congestion on routes into Witney deters people from visiting and shopping locally, the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan aims to ensure that Witney remains a thriving Oxfordshire town. The plan seeks to deliver improvements to walking, cycling and public transport to enable a choice of transport modes instead of reliance on the private car.

- Calls to reopen High Street to traffic and remove 20mph limit.

As part of the planned monitoring and evaluation of the 20mph project, the council will be contacting all the parish and town councils to seek their views on how it is working and any changes that may be required

(subject to consultation and funding) – further information is provided under the Monitoring heading in [The 20mph transformation programme](#) | [Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Youth, Schools & Community.

- More youth facilities needed.
- Local schools require more support and staff training, especially to help students with hidden disabilities.

In response to the first point, we would like to outline how the County Council's Targeted Youth Support Service currently supports young people in Witney. This includes:

- **Detached Youth Work:** TYSS staff engage with young people in public spaces, including skate parks and hotspots identified through community safety data. This includes partnership work with Thames Valley Police and The Station Detached Youth team.
- **One-to-One and Group Support:** TYSS offers tailored interventions for young people. These are delivered in schools and community settings.

We are also currently working closely with partners in the district council and the local voluntary and community sector to look at ways to increase youth provision and activities in the area.

Regarding the second point on schools, I believe the Education and SEND teams may be best placed to identify appropriate contacts for staff training and inclusion support.

From - Targeted Youth Support Services, Oxfordshire County Council

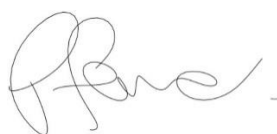
Cleanliness & Town Appearance

Witney described as dirty and unkempt — bird mess, weeds on pavements, litter on main routes (including A40). Concerns that the town's appearance is embarrassing to visitors.

As regards cleanliness and town appearance, this needs to be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council - [Litter, street cleaning and dog fouling](#) - [West Oxfordshire District Council](#) which deals with litter picking as well

I hope these responses suitably addresses the points raised in your letter.

Yours sincerely



Paul Fermer
Director of Environment & Highways

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27 August 2025

Sharon Groth
Town Clerk & Chief Executive Officer
Witney Town Council
Town Hall
Market Square
WITNEY
Oxfordshire
OX28 6AG

Dear Sharon

Further to your letter of 6th August, please see my responses to the various points raised:-

Town Environment and Cleanliness

Ubico, in partnership with WODC, is currently implementing a new task and asset management system—**Alloy**—within the Street Cleansing operation. Once fully operational, Alloy will enable teams to monitor and record bin fullness levels, report damage, and gather data to inform demand-led scheduling. This will significantly improve the ability to respond to local needs and maintain service standards.

While the request for additional bins is noted, simply increasing bin numbers is not always the most effective solution. The data from Alloy will help identify high-use areas or “hot-spots” where additional provision may be justified. Regarding recycling bins, we understand the desire for more facilities, but experience shows these are often contaminated due to “wish-cycling”—where items are placed in recycling bins in the hope they can be recycled. WODC is actively exploring ways to address this, including the possibility of a small-scale trial aimed at improving recycling outcomes.

Public Facilities & Accessibility

West Oxfordshire District Council are undertaking a full review of all public toilets across the district. The report and recommendations are due to be discussed at the Executive meeting on 10th September.

The public toilets at The Leys and Langdale Gate Witney are, unfortunately, subject to vandalism and we endeavour to do our best to keep these sites safe, open, and at a good standard.

Street cleansing in Witney follows a set schedule, which is supplemented by reports from frontline teams and members of the public. If there are concerns about the cleanliness of specific roads, we encourage these to be reported directly to WODC so that Ubico can respond promptly and effectively.

Leisure & Youth Provision

- Locked astro turf limits access to football for young people:

We have assumed this relates to Witney Artificial Turf Pitch. This facility is under the current Leisure Management Contract with GLL, which operates a booking system/ hire agreement to ensure the correct use of the facility. There are no plans to unlock the facility. Although going forward we do have a Playzone facility coming to Windrush Place pitches, which in agreement with the Town Council will likely operate club spark (smart access), which will enable members of the community to easily book the facility, but again this wouldn't be a free fully open access facility, as income will be required for ongoing maintenance.

- Requests for improved sports and leisure facilities (e.g. trampoline park, soft play and Leisure Centre).

We have assumed this related to the Windrush Leisure Centre. We will be looking at the s106 we have available and how best this can go towards improvements at the Leisure Centre, although exact timescales are to be determined as based on various development and trigger points for the release of fund.

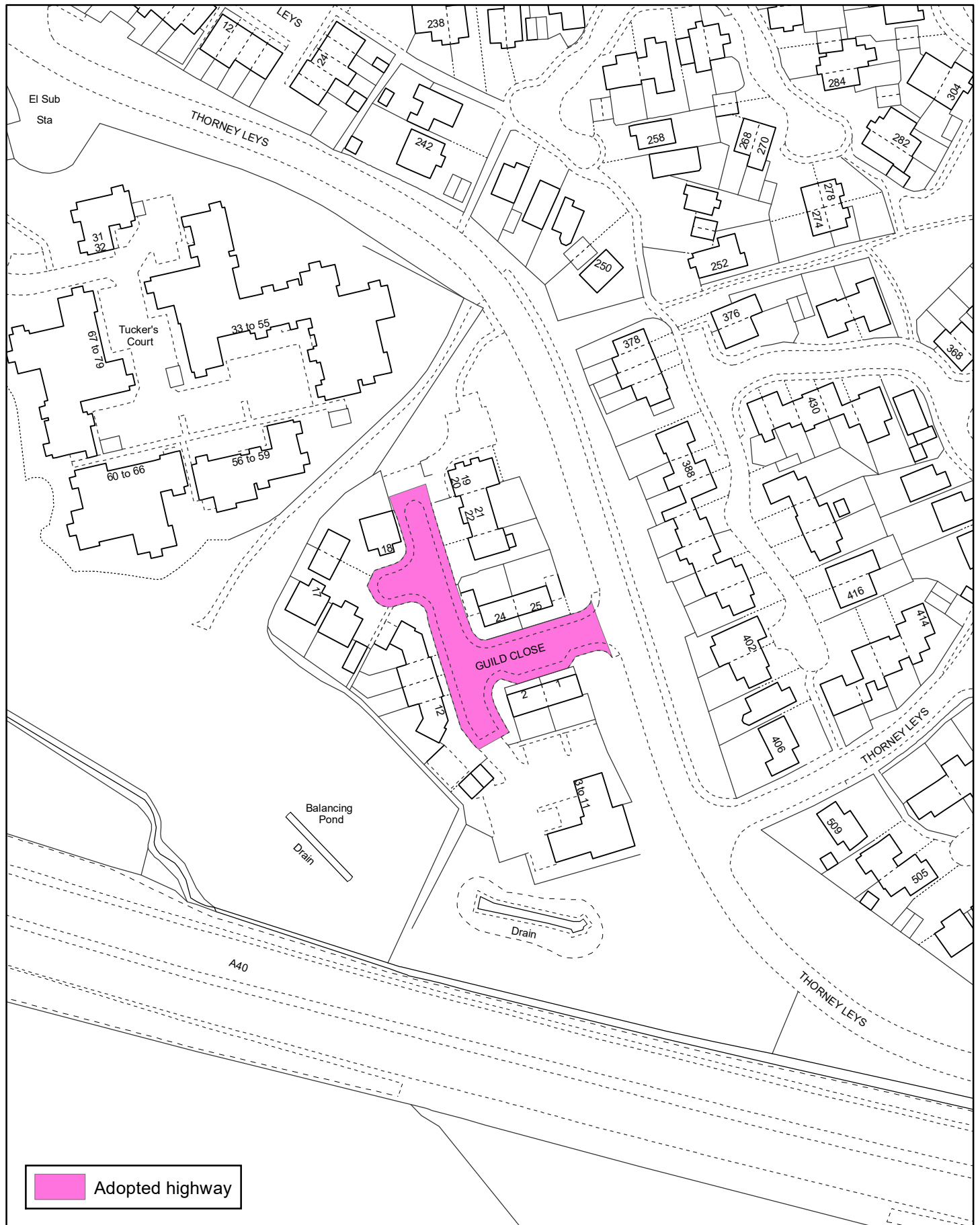
Yours sincerely



GILES HUGHES
Chief Executive

Witney: 410.203 S38 (and S278) Highways Act 1980 Agenda Item 21e

Land at Thorney Leys



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