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

Held on Tuesday, 21 September 2021

At 6.00 pm in the Main Hall, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	A Prosser J Aitman	V Gwatkin
Officers:	Adam Clapton Claire Green Simon Wright	Deputy Town Clerk Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	0 members of the public.	

P483 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Collins, L Duncan, M Jones and A McMahon

P484 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R Smith declared a non-prejudicial interest in Application WTC/168/21 by virtue of knowing the applicant.

P485 TO ADOPT AND SIGN AS CORRECT THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 JULY AND 10 & 31 AUGUST 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meetings of the committee held on 20 July and 10 & 31 August 2021 were adopted as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

P486 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 20 JULY AND 10 & 31 AUGUST 2021

Minute P438 – Thermal Imaging Camera

It was reported that a suitable camera had been identified for purchase and discussions with groups who could operate it would be undertaken.

Minute P441 – Wildflower Planting at Recreation Grounds

The committee was advised that locations for the planting together with the approach to be taken had been agreed. Members noted the need for sites to be mowed at appropriate times and that the work would be undertaken by the Council's works team.

The committee gave agreement for the wildflower planting to be undertaken.

P487 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

P488 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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

Resolved:

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

P489 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

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

Resolved:

That the list circulated advising of District Council planning decisions be noted.

P490 **AVENUE TWO, WITNEY - PROPOSED PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

The committee considered a consultation document from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in respect of an application for parking restrictions at Avenue Two, Witney. It was reported that officers and the Chair had contacted OCC to establish further details and seeking guidance on relevant issues that could be raised.

Members expressed their disappointment that the application had been received prior to the determination of the adjacent planning application by West Oxfordshire District Council. During discussion the committee considered the current use of the area for parking, access to nearby industrial estates and the Country Park, pedestrian/cycle safety and the ambition for an active travel route in the area.

It was suggested and agreed that an objection be raised incorporating the concerns raised at the meeting and as part of the planning application consultation. In addition a letter should be sent from the Town Clerk to OCC, copied to the local County Councillors, regarding the Town Council concerns.

Resolved:

1. That, the response as appended to these minutes be submitted with regard to the application for parking restrictions at Avenue 2, Witney: and
2. That, a letter be sent to Oxfordshire County Council, copied to local County Councillors, by the Town Clerk with regard to the application.

P491 **OXFORDSHIRE PLAN 2050**

Consideration was given to a consultation document in respect of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. It was explained that the plan would sit above the district council Local Plans and consisted of a number of priority themes to which the committee was being asked to consider with regard to Witney.

The committee considered the themes of Addressing Climate Change, Improving Environmental Quality, Creating Strong and Healthy Communities, Planning for Sustainable Travel and Connectivity and Creating Jobs and Providing Homes and identified responses that could impact on Witney.

Resolved:

That, the response, appended to these minutes, be submitted as the council response to the consultation on Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

P492 **OXFORD-CAMBRIDGE ARC PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The committee considered a central government consultation about the future of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, seeking views to help shape a vision for the Spatial Framework.

Members acknowledged the links to the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan and the need for Witney to be recognised despite being on the boundary of the proposals.

It was agreed that a response based on the issues raised in respect of the Oxfordshire 2050 plan be submitted.

Resolved:

That the following response be submitted in respect of the consultation:

Witney Town Council welcomes the consultation on the proposed Oxford-Cambridge Arc and although the town is not directly impacted, looks forward to a more substantial rapid travel network as part of a wider scheme reaching the outer areas of the County, West Oxfordshire included.

The principle areas in this part of the County along with the Town Council have declared Climate Emergencies so it would ask that the scheme compliments the policies of the emerging Oxfordshire Plan 2050, including; Addressing Climate Change, Improving Environmental Quality and Creating Strong and Healthy Communities so it is fundamentally driven by the sustainability of existing communities, rather than provision of further housing across green areas.

The meeting closed at: 7.30 pm

Chair

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Witney Town CouncilPlanning Minutes - 21st September 2021

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488- 1 WTC/161/21 Plot Ref :-21/02748/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 26/08/2021
 Location :- 44 ASHCOMBE CRESCENT Date Returned :- 22/09/2021
 ASHCOMBE CRESCENT
 Proposal : Conservatory conversion to provide garden room.
 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.

488- 2 WTC/162/21 Plot Ref :-21/02894/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 26/08/2021
 Location :- 81 FARMERS CLOSE Date Returned :- 22/09/2021
 FARMERS CLOSE
 Proposal : Erection of porch to front and first floor side 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.

488- 3 WTC/164/21 Plot Ref :-21/02868/FUL Type :- FULL
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 06/09/2021
 Location :- 4 TUNGSTEN PARK Date Returned :- 22/09/2021
 COLLETTS WAY
 Proposal : Erection of external cantilever storage racks and associated lighting units.
 Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application, there was a discussion of concerns, with the following observations:
 - That Planning Officers seek advice from the relevant technical consultees, and that the proposed scheme should give full consideration for the neighbourliness of potential light spill and ensure that this does not have a negative impact for neighbouring residential properties. Proportionate conditions should be applied to ensure that the lights are not in use when and where it isn't necessary (time restricted).
 - Through consultation with WODC Conservation Officers, members ask that the scheme minimises disruption to wildlife and that all possible mitigation measures are applied.

488- 4 WTC/165/21 Plot Ref :-21/02970/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 06/09/2021
Location :- 49 VALENCE CRESCENT Date Returned :- 22/09/2021
VALENCE CRESCENT
Proposal : Conversion of integral garage to living accommodation.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

488- 5 WTC/166/21 Plot Ref :-21/02834/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 13/09/2021
Location :- UNIT 6-7 NEWLAND IND EST Date Returned :- 27/09/2021
NEWLAND
Proposal : Changes to internal layout of units and replace existing windows and doors in front elevation of Unit 6 with new window, door and two roller doors. (Retrospective).
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

488- 6 WTC/167/21 Plot Ref :-21/02963/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 13/09/2021
Location :- 14 HERON DRIVE Date Returned :- 27/09/2021
HERON DRIVE
Proposal : Erection of timber, pent-roof garden shed.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

488- 7 WTC/168/21 Plot Ref :-21/03011/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 13/09/2021
Location :- 95 BURFORD ROAD Date Returned :- 27/09/2021
BURFORD ROAD
Proposal : Rear single storey infill extension.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

488- 8 WTC/169/21 Plot Ref :-21/02917/ADV Type :- ADVERTISIN
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 13/09/2021
Location :- 27 MARKET SQUARE Date Returned :- 27/09/2021
MARKET SQUARE
Proposal : New non-illuminated fascia and projecting signs.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

488- 9 WTC/170/21 Plot Ref :-21/02931/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 13/09/2021
Location :- THE GRIFFIN INN Date Returned :- 27/09/2021
NEWLAND
Proposal : Replace existing first floor rear window with door and installation of fire escape stairs.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

488- 10 WTC/171/21 Plot Ref :-21/02932/LBC Type :- LISTED BUI
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 13/09/2021
Location :- THE GRIFFIN INN Date Returned :- 27/09/2021
NEWLAND
Proposal : Internal and external alterations to replace existing first floor rear window with door and installation of fire escape stairs.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

488- 11 WTC/172/21 Plot Ref :-21/03031/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 13/09/2021
Location :- 13 WILLOWBANK Date Returned :- 27/09/2021
WILLOWBANK
Proposal : Change of use of land to extend the domestic curtilage along with the addition of decking (retrospective).
Observations : Witney Town Council object to this application. Members do not support development outside of the applicants existing boundary and do not want to set precedent for this type of development in Witney. This development does not accord to Policy OS2 in that it does not form a logical complement to the existing pattern of development or the character of the area, and it does not enhance the local landscape and the setting of the settlement.

488- 12 WTC/173/21 Plot Ref :-21/03046/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 13/09/2021
Location :- 38 DAVENPORT ROAD Date Returned :- 27/09/2021
DAVENPORT ROAD
Proposal : Erection of two storey side and single storey rear extension.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

The Meeting closed at : 7:30pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

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Witney Town Council strongly object to the proposal to introduce new parking prohibitions in Witney at Avenue Two (Parkside Business Park) with new sections of Double Yellow Lines on both sides for the section South of its East/West spur.

The Oxfordshire County Council 'Statement of Reasons' document states "*proposed measures are aimed at ensuring that 1, danger is minimised whilst 2, facilitating the effective and safe passage of traffic and the provision of appropriate on-street parking facilities.*"

Since the proposal is taking away on-street parking, reason 2 is flawed. Witney Town Council reject the premise of the proposed parking restrictions - These proposals are being made primarily to facilitate transit of HGVs at the expense of on-street parking. This proposal doesn't remove danger, it facilitates an extra danger that wasn't present before. Any new appropriate development should plan site access entirely on the East/West spur of Avenue Two.

Witney Town Council oppose all new HGV and commercial vehicle access on this section of the North/South spur. The Southern end of Avenue Two is not a dead-end. It is a busy, well-used active travel route used by families and children, it is the main route used by schoolchildren, pedestrians and cyclists from Ducklington. The Sustrans route that passes through this section of Avenue Two is a National Cycle Network Route (Route 577) and should be protected.

A primary concern for Witney Town Council is the provision of a safe active travel route for our residents. Witney is embarking on an LCWIP (Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Policy) and this proposal undermines this. This section of Avenue Two needs developing as an active travel route, providing safe connections to and across Station Lane, not hampering by the introduction of more HGVs and commercial vehicle (LGV and van) movements.

Further, Avenue Two is the main access to Witney Lake and Country Park - a Witney Town Council amenity for leisure and enjoyment of nature. The Park also provides popular off-road through routes to Cogges and Ducklington. The current parking on this section of the North/South spur is the only parking available for users of the Lake and Country Park, particularly for those of limited mobility who cannot enjoy it by entirely active means of transport. Members are concerned that the plans are not taking in to account that this is a busy thoroughfare for those users. The on-road parking has a wide-ranging community benefit and should not be removed for the advantage of one business.

The plans give an indication of the incredibly tight turning route/movement of HGVs entering and exiting the site, even with the removal of parking. The plans do not illustrate that these vehicle movements include any safety features to protect pedestrians and cyclists, users of the footpath and cycle route would be at unacceptable risk of harm.

The current on-street parking is an overflow from users of other businesses on the Industrial Park. Has the developer carried out an assessment or consultation with the business owners and employers in the neighbouring units who undoubtedly use the current on-street parking that is available? Is there a wider travel and transport plan for neighbouring businesses? Any assessment needs to be inclusive of the potential impact of the proposed Travis Perkins development as well as users of other business units at this site.

The current parking arrangements for Avenue Two provides far greater social value to Witney residents than 2 new HGV accesses to the commercial site and builders' yard. Particularly since the yard could be designed with access from the East/West spur. The social value is primarily for access to the Lake & Country Park but also occasionally for users of the bowls club at the Leys and also for workers at the assorted established businesses on Avenue Two.

Whilst Witney Town Council do not commit to supporting parking in this location in perpetuity, we strongly oppose removal of parking for the sake of introducing HGV access for one business. If a scheme came forward that incorporated improvements for safe access to the Lake & Country Park, as well as better connectivity to promote active travel, then perhaps it might be more acceptable to Witney residents. However, Witney Town Council can't support a proposal for removal of on-street parking for the sole purpose of making the route more suitable for accommodating HGVs, and frequent commercial vehicle movements.

Since the sole motivation for this proposal to introduce new parking prohibitions is to facilitate a planning application, Witney Town Council would like Oxfordshire County Council to consider our serious concerns and to reflect them in their response to the related planning application (West Oxfordshire District Council reference 21/02210/FUL), so that HGV's are not introduced to the route.

Witney Town Council would like the developer to re-consider the layout in order that HGV access is limited to the East/West spur road where there is less likelihood of pedestrian and cyclist conflict.

Oxfordshire Plan 2050

Response from Witney Town Council – October 2021

As Witney is the administrative town and largest service centre in West Oxfordshire, the Town Council welcomes a further opportunity to help shape the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (OP 2050). The Council has ambitious, yet realistic aspirations for the services it offers as well as on the climate, environment and health and wellbeing of its residents, all of which share a synergy with this plan over the next 30 years. Below are comments concerning individual themes and policies of the plan:

Theme 1 – Addressing Climate Change

The Town Council welcomes policies on energy and hopes that all authorities can work collaboratively across Oxfordshire to deliver policies on locally distributed community energy networks in West Oxfordshire before 2050, therefore hastening sustainable design and construction.

Flooding is a particular risk in Witney with occurrences of serious flooding becoming more prevalent. The Town Council looks forward to policies addressing this issue particularly concerning mitigations which should be implemented prior to the commencement of new developments.

Theme 2 – Improving Environmental Quality

The Town Council looks forward to the OP 2050 protecting and enhancing the landscape characters in Witney, including the Upper and Lower Windrush Valley, buffers between the town and outlying villages and addressing the ownership & management of land.

Water quality and the affects of pollution in the River Windrush and its tributaries is a major concern in Witney. the Town Council would like to see policies addressing the discharge of sewage into the waterways by businesses, but also agricultural pollution from farms which lie outside of the town.

The Town Council would also welcome robust policies on air quality, with the Bridge Street area of Witney suffering poorly. The emerging Oxfordshire Transport Policy may take a lead on this, but the OP 2050 policies could be extended to include the sustainability of transporting food and products, looking at the links between the service centres such as Witney and its neighbours.

Theme 3 – Creating Strong & Healthy Communities

The Town Council is an enthusiastic supporter of creating healthy and stronger communities.

More consideration should be given on policies which allow access to land so residents can enjoy the countryside as recreation. Many areas within walking distanced are private and prohibit public access.

The connections between Witney village neighbours are generally only via roads and overgrown bridleways, rather than footpaths and designated cycle lanes. As a supporter of Active Travel, policies on this connectivity would be welcomed along with one providing infrastructure from new developments for the 15 Minute Neighbourhoods and School Streets initiatives

A more strategic oversight of County sports and recreational facilities is required with a greater power to deliver them by local Councils. The dissemination of information on local amenities to other areas in the County is needed. Stronger policies outlining infrastructure which developers must provide in their schemes for example football pitches and recreation areas should be provided.

Theme 4 – Planning for Sustainable Travel & Connectivity

The requirement of people, businesses, tourists and freight to traverse the County is a concern which needs to be addressed in the OP 2050. The current infrastructure is already oversubscribed and the effect this has on these groups cannot be underestimated in terms of cost to Witney, the community and the County.

The Town Council is a support of railway from Carterton to Oxford and beyond to serve the communities of South-West Oxfordshire. The current plans for the A40 bus lane between Witney and Oxford with a travel hub at Eynsham do not address the problem; any hub needs to be nearer to Witney to reduce the traffic between there and Oxford.

Transport links to Oxford Parkway and the outer parts of the County with rapid links to the rest of the County and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc should also be high in the priorities of forming the OP 2050.

Theme 5 – Creating Jobs & Providing Homes

The Town Council welcomes policies on the economy, jobs and tourism. It would further welcome policies on Town Centre renewal to help create a 'buzz' in the town centres, these could include easier facilitation of community events and festivities.

Policies on creating more easily accessible funding for and investment in culture and the arts would be welcomed. West Oxfordshire is severely lacking in this regard and is often overlooked during the current planning process.

Affordable housing is an issue in Witney and across West Oxfordshire so the Town Council would like to see policies which provide quality, local affordable homes, rather than landowners, investors, and developers profiting from inflated land and property values.

Town and Parish Councils often require land within their town or village centres to provide items discharging their functions of providing a community amenity. A policy to make it easier for towns to have the right to buy pockets of land in town centres would be welcomed.