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FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday, 18 September 2023

At 5.15 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

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

Councillors:	J Aitman	J Doughty
	T Ashby	D Edwards-Hughes
	D Enright	D Newcombe
	R Smith	J Robertshaw
	A Bailey	S Simpson
	G Doughty	J Treloar
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	Two members of the public.	

476 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Cherry & O Collins.

Councillors D Newcombe and A Bailey arrived at 17:43pm and 18:06pm respectively.

477 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

478 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation. However, two members of the public joined the meeting at 18:20pm.

479 WITNEY HIGH STREET & MARKET SQUARE ENHANCEMENTS

The Council considered the response to be submitted to Oxfordshire County Council in respect of the public engagement being carried out to improve the High Street & Market Square area.

Members were reminded that all households, approx. 15,000 received a leaflet advising of the public engagement and they were encouraged to ensure that as many as their constituents participate in the process including those that do not live in the town but visit to use its

resources. Members were reminded that paper copies of the survey were available from the Town Council reception for those that could not complete it online.

Members were also advised that as well as the Town Council response they could also submit an individual response.

Resolved:

That, the attached be forwarded to Oxfordshire County Council being the Town Council's official response to the public engagement questionnaire.

The meeting closed at: 6.23 pm

Chair

1. What best describes your overall opinion of the objective to 'Enhance public spaces while protecting the town's history and character'? Select one option only.

Witney Town Council fully supports the enhancement of Witney's public spaces while protecting the town's history and character. In particular the Town Council would like to see the inclusion of signposting to historic landmarks outside of the town centre examples being, but not exhaustive, Cogges Farm Museum, Bishops Palace; as well as sites such as the Buttercross and St Marys Church.

2. What best describes your overall opinion of the objective to 'Support local businesses and the markets'? Select one option only.

Witney Town Council fully supports local businesses and the town's markets. The Town Council appreciates that trading is at the heart of the town and requests that the opinions of businesses, their customers and visitors to the town are fully listened to and their observations incorporated within the initial design. Witney Town Council would like to see a design that would allow for businesses to expand their offerings via the use of pavement licences as well as a pragmatic approach to vehicles that need to load or deliver within the High Street and Market Square area. The policy around loading bays should be formalised and be transparent in order for businesses to operate without incurring fines.

3. What best describes your overall opinion of the objective to 'Make it easier and more enjoyable to walk, wheel and cycle'? Select one option only.

Witney Town Council agrees that it should be easier and more enjoyable to walk, wheel and cycle in the High Street and Market Square. The Town Council understands the importance for all users including those that drive and park to access the High Street then become pedestrians; safety should be paramount in the designs. The re-positioning of cycle racks such as those close to the entrance to the Woolgate Centre would discourage cycling on pavements in that area as well as allow for a greater width of pavement for walkers. It is noted that there are several 'pinch points' within the town centre which need careful consideration.

The Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) already identifies in Section 3.3 improvements to High Street and Market Square to "*Improve the public realm to make the High Street a more accessible, pleasant environment for people to walk, cycle and spend time.*" and are pleased to see Objective 100 being implement however the Town Council asks that objectives 62 and 76 of the LCWIP plan are fully implemented as part of these improvement works.

4. What best describes your overall opinion of the objective to 'Upgrade access to public transport'? Select one option only.

Witney Town Council fully supports the objective to upgrade access to public transport. Although the Town Council believes that there is a good connection to transport provided by Stagecoach and the West Oxfordshire Community Transport provision, the Town Council would like to see routes that connect Witney to other towns such as Swindon and Abingdon, as well as the support of special

services such as the one to Oxford United on matchdays and the recently announced connection to London by the Oxford Tube.

Disabled access at bus stops could be improved.

Witney Town Council would also request that all transport user groups are encouraged to share their views as part of the design process.

5. What best describes your overall opinion of the objective to 'Improve safety for all users'? Select one option only.

Witney Town Council fully supports the objectives to improve safety for all users of the High Street and Market Square. However, the Town Council would like to see the formalisation of road crossings and that any shared spaces follow the guidance from the Highway Code to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists are given priority above that of vehicles. This is particularly important around any blue badge area to ensure those users remain safe. As a Town Council, Members are aware of the dangers of electric scooters and would welcome any scheme that would discourage their use.

6. What improvements would you like to see in Witney High Street and Market Square? (Please select your choice of response for each option listed below).

Based on previous answers Witney Town Council considers that all listed below need to be taken into consideration when designing improvements to the High Street and Market Square.

- New road design at Corn Street and Welch Way junctions
- Less traffic
- Revised taxi rank
- More loading bays
- Blue badge parking
- More crossings
- Wider footways
- Improved footway surfacing
- Better directions and signage
- Improved lighting
- More safe and secure cycle parking
- More space for bus stops
- More trees
- More plants and gardens
- More seating
- Play Space
- Public Art
- More areas for outdoor dining

- More space for events space
- More space for the market
- Information on local history and heritage

7. If there is another improvement you would like to see in Witney High Street and Market Square please tell us here.

Witney Town Council believe that consideration should be given to the implementation of ANPR technology in order to improve the safety of users and help better enforce the traffic restrictions.

The Town Council would also like to see improvements to the use of the area outside the Angel Public House and in the vicinity of the Buttercross and War Memorial – although mindful of the historic importance of both assets and the annual Remembrance parade which takes place in this vicinity.

8. What improvements would encourage you to walk, wheel or cycle to Witney High Street and Market Square more often? (Tick all that apply).

Based on previous answers Witney Town Council considers that all listed below need to be taken into consideration when designing improvements to the High Street and Market Square.

- More safe secure cycle parking
- Better walking and cycling routes to the town centre
- Better enforcement of the traffic restriction
- More seating, plants and gardens
- Improved pedestrian crossing facilities
- Improved footway surfacing
- Other

9. Which measures would encourage you to use public transport more often for access to Witney High Street and Market Square? (Tick all that apply).

- More space for bus stops
- Bigger shelters/more seats
- Better bus timetables and route maps
- Improved access for disabled people
- Other

10. In your opinion, what makes a successful High Street?

To be successful the High Street needs to be accessible to all, and safety being paramount. There needs to be clear signposting and way finding around the town to assist visitors to the town.

Signposting to areas of business outside of the consultation area, such as Corn Street, Marriots Walk and the upper end of the High Street where further businesses and shops are located.

A redesign of the Blue Badge parking, currently this is parallel to a raised wall which restricts the entry and exit of vehicles.

Better public transport displays, showing information of routes and times.

11. Please tell us anything else you would like to say about Witney High Street and Market Square

Witney Town Council would like to see continuation funding/commuted sums for all street furniture that is installed as part of the project if these items are to be assigned to Witney Town Council to maintain post project.