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

**Held on Tuesday, 15 July 2025**

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

### **Present:**

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	G Meadows
	J Doughty	D Temple
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Cara Murray	Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning
Others:	Councillor Duncan Enright	

### **P389 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Smith.

### **P390 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

### **P391 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 3 June & 24 June were received.

#### **Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 3 June & 24 June be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

### **P392 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

*Councillor D Enright joined the meeting at 6:09pm*

P393 **WODC - PREFERRED POLICY OPTIONS PAPER CONSULTATION**

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

The Committee received the notice of a West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2041 consultation.

Members were advised this was a crucial opportunity to influence development in Witney for the next decade. The Town Council had provided ideas and entered comments on varying policies since its first meeting with District Council officers on this matter in October 2023.

The Committee discussed various topics, picking up on earlier discussions and agreed a draft response, as outline below, should be ratified at the Full Council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> July due to the length and importance of the plan.

‘Witney Town Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to West Oxfordshire District Council’s Local Plan 2041 consultation. The Council acknowledges the extensive work undertaken in developing the draft plan and appreciates the strategic intent behind its proposals. However, it believes that there are several issues and constructive suggestions which should be addressed to ensure the plan fully meets the needs of Witney’s residents, businesses, and future generations.

Policy specific points are as follows:

**Core Policies**

**Core Policies (CP) 1-4 - Settlement Identity, Village Integrity & Community Governance**

Witney Town Council supports the principle of maintaining distinct settlement identities and urges that strong safeguards are included to ensure villages retain their separation and character.

However, the Local Plan should recognise and include provision to support Community Governance Reviews. As development expands to the built-up areas of service centres such as Witney beyond current boundaries, there should be a clear and responsive mechanism for reviewing and adjusting parish/town boundaries to reflect this coalescence and ensure coherent community representation and funding for services.

**Core Policy (CP) 4 - Housing Quality and Tenure**

The town council recommends the Local Plan includes a position discouraging the continued sale of leasehold properties. There are clear disadvantages to developments which provide housing under this framework which is already evidenced in the town.

New development should be prioritised in and around town centres to ensure residents have more sustainable and convenient access to essential services.

The disparity between the quality of private and social housing must be addressed in the Local Plan. Social housing should meet the same standards as private developments to promote equity and dignity in living standards.

**Core Policies (CP) 5-6 - Delivery of Infrastructure, Clarity and Enforcement**

The plan must take a firmer stance on the delivery of promised infrastructure, particularly shops and community facilities, within large-scale developments. The Council recommend that

developers be subject to stricter conditions and potential penalties if delivery is not made within agreed timescales in line with point 5.100.

Paragraph 5.83 is vague and insufficiently robust. It should clearly set out expectations for coordination between all relevant authorities and infrastructure providers, not just a 'timely manner.' Delays are often caused by third parties, and the policy should reflect this, ensuring that responsibility and accountability are embedded in the planning process.

Overall, Witney Town Council believes Core Policy 6 lacks clarity and enforceability in its current form and should be strengthened accordingly.

### **Core Policy (CP) 7 - Flood Risk Management**

The plan's approach to flood risk, particularly in Witney, is notably weaker than in previous iterations with less of a focus on the subject. The town council strongly urges that flood mitigation policies be made more robust.

Witney, like other areas, faces real flood risks which need to be acknowledged and proactively addressed in Witney specific policies of the plan like they are for others.

### **Core Policy (CP) 9 - Community, Health, and Wellbeing**

The emphasis on community, health, and wellbeing appears reduced compared to previous plans. These themes should be central and crosscutting throughout the plan, underpinning all aspects of development policy.

Although raised under DM 23, Community centres (including multi-use spaces such as public houses or halls) should be a required component of developments over a certain size. These facilities are essential for fostering community cohesion and delivering local services.

There is a significant lack of focus on the needs of young people in the current draft. The town council urges the inclusion of more targeted policies and investment in youth provision, particularly for early teens. This should include Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), youth centres, recreational spaces, and facilities such as bowling. Provision should be equitable across all settlements, particularly in Witney and surrounding areas where a clear gap of non-sporting facilities exists.

Art and culture initiatives should be given greater consideration by developers from the earliest stages of planning and should be more robustly integrated into the Local Plan. These projects are intrinsic to a thriving town, enriching community identity and playing a vital role in attracting visitors to Witney.

While the aging population is referenced and welcomed in DM29, the plan does not go far enough in addressing/considering the diverse needs of this demographic alongside those of younger residents. Intergenerational planning should be considered, ensuring developments are inclusive, accessible, and support lifelong wellbeing.

### **Development Management Policies (DM)**

#### **DM1 – Key Principles for New Development**

To promote sustainable and safe living environments, the following development Infrastructure standards should be included at construction stages in all new developments above a specific threshold:

- Installation of grit bins on roads with gradients above a certain level.

- Provision of bus shelters on key routes to encourage the use of public transport.

#### **DM4 – A Healthy Food Environment**

Allotment provision must be strengthened in the plan. While community gardens are a welcome feature, they are not a substitute for full size allotment plots. For developments over a defined threshold, a specific number of full-sized accessible allotments should be required to meet growing demand and support food resilience and community wellbeing.

#### **DM37 - Sustainable Tourism**

To support local businesses and promote tourism, Witney must be recognised as a visitor destination. Provision for coach and motorhome parking should be included in the plan, ensuring accessibility for a range of visitors to the towns heritage and provide a boost for the local economy.'

#### **Recommended:**

That the above draft response to the consultation be forwarded to Full Council on 28 July 2025 for consideration.

#### **P394 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.

#### **P395 APPLICATION FOR A NEW PAVEMENT LICENCE - THE THREE HORSESHOES, 78 CORN STREET, WITNEY - W/25/00681/PAVLIC**

The Committee noted the Pavement Licence Application for The Three Horseshoes, 78 Corn Street, Witney under the Business and Planning Act 2020.

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 10 July 2025.

#### **P396 PLANNING DECISIONS**

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

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

**Resolved:**

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

**P397 WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 24 June 2025. A Member present at the meeting confirmed to the Committee that the minutes were a true representation.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 24 June 2025 be noted.

**P398 WEST END PERMIT SCHEME - INFORMAL CONSULTATION**

The Committee received notification from Oxfordshire County Council of their consultation with residents of West End to gather feedback on a potential permit parking scheme which would formalise the parking arrangements.

Members heard how this had been an outstanding request of residents for some time and therefore welcomed this engagement.

**Resolved:**

That, the notification of the consultation be noted.

**P399 A40 EYNHAM PARK & RIDE TO WOLVERCOTE PROJECT UPDATE**

The Committee received correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council in respect of the progress of the A40 Eynham to Wolvercote works. Due to the inevitable impact on the town and its residents, Members welcomed the opportunity to comment on the application once it was validated by West Oxfordshire District Council.

**Resolved:**

That, the correspondence be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 7.27 pm

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Chair



Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

Observations : Witney Town Council welcomes and embraces this application. Members are supportive of the proposed change of use, making use of a property that the applicant notes has been vacant for approximately 18 months.

Members recognise the importance of providing supportive environments for vulnerable young people and commends the intention to repurpose an existing dwelling in a sustainable and meaningful way.

Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

Observations : Whitney Town Council welcomes this application and supports the proposed installation of renewable air source heating systems. Members are pleased to see green initiatives being introduced and particularly commend the retrofitting of older buildings to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Members trust that West Oxfordshire District Council will give due consideration to the secure placement of the units and ensure that measures are in place to minimise any noise disturbance or potential interference from outside sources.

394- 9 WTC/079/25 Plot Ref :-25/01569/CLP Type :- CERT LAWFU  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 08/07/2025  
Location :- 33 BURFORD ROAD Date Returned :- 16/07/2025  
BURFORD ROAD  
Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness (erection of a porch and insertion of 3no. rooflights).  
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

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394- 10 WTC/080/25 Plot Ref :-25/01558/S73 Type :- VARIATION  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 08/07/2025  
Location :- 82 EARLY ROAD Date Returned :- 16/07/2025  
EARLY ROAD  
Proposal : Variation of condition 2 of permission 24/03135/HHD to allow changes to the approved plans to include a link between the outbuilding and the rear extension.  
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

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394- 11 WTC/081/25 Plot Ref :-25/01570/S73 Type :- VARIATION  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 08/07/2025  
Location :- 33 BURFORD ROAD Date Returned :- 16/07/2025  
BURFORD ROAD  
Proposal : Variation of condition 2 of Planning Permission 24/01400/HHD to allow for amendments to the existing windowsills on the front elevation and the erection of a new wall, gate and railings on the boundary.  
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

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394- 12 WTC/082/25 Plot Ref :-25/01580/CLP Type :- CERT LAWFU  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 08/07/2025  
Location :- MOORLAND CENTRE, 24 DARK Date Returned :- 16/07/2025  
LANE  
DARK LANE  
Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness (stationing of two shipping containers for storage in connection with the ongoing use of the site for Oxfordshire County Council fleet vehicles).  
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

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The Meeting closed at : 7:27pm

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

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council