

**FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 16 October 2023**

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

**Present:**

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows J Aitman T Ashby D Enright R Smith R Crouch	G Doughty J Doughty D Edwards-Hughes D Newcombe S Simpson J Treloar
Officers:	Sharon Groth Adam Clapton Claire Green	Town Clerk Deputy Town Clerk Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities
Others:	Chris Hargraves	Planning Policy Manager, WODC

550 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bailey, L Cherry, J Robertshaw and D Temple.

551 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

552 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

553 **WODC LOCAL PLAN 2041**

The Council received a presentation from the Planning Policy Manager at West Oxfordshire District Council regarding a review of its Local Plan 2041.

The Plan was the bedrock in defining future development in Witney and West Oxfordshire and input was required from stakeholders, including the town council, on how to shape it and on what policies needed to be considered for inclusion.

Members raised several concerns, questions and opinions and agreed the following points in the town council's response to the open consultation.

### Draft Local Plan Objectives

Witney Town Council recognises Witney is and will remain the service centre/hub and administrative centre of the District up to 2041 and therefore needs to ensure the necessary facilities and infrastructure are in place from future development. There are a number of objectives in the Local Plan consultation, all of which are important across the district, but the priorities of the town council are:

- Designation of further burial land/land for cemeteries
- Designation of land for sports pitches and an obligation that developers provide them in a timely manner, to a good standard with associated FA approved changing facilities.
- Designation of further allotment land
- More community Halls for greater integration
- Coach/Campervan parking in Witney
- Designated land for community use, such as a camping sites for Witney's local scout groups.
- A strategy for managing water quality.

Further key objectives should include:

- Expansion of healthcare provision
- Greater parking infrastructure for cars, electric cars, coaches, campervans, vans, and bikes integrated with options for increased rail travel
- Green Energy generation which provides energy and further community gain/payback for the local area
- Affordable housing so young residents do not have to leave the area.
- A housing mix that includes market rate homes, affordable homes + Social rent (for key workers) meaning the Council begins to build a housing stock again (social sustainability)
- Future-proofed housing for the elderly/independent living for those needing extra care needs.
- More or updated, enlarged Leisure Centres, a Lido and running track.
- Provision of Youth Centres
- More Public Houses and support of those already in place
- More Public Art
- Land for horticulture (for example market gardening once in the Brize Norton area)

### The future plan of development in West Oxfordshire

Although Witney Town Council can see the benefits of the current pattern and the others suggested in the consultation, it believes the pattern should be spread across the District with a degree of proportionality to deliver improvements to all towns and villages.

Any development should be people-focused and respond to the needs of the community living there to achieve healthy place shaping. Quality transport connections must be delivered which connect all to each other and to their larger service centres.

### Call for Sites, Ideas and Opportunities

Witney Town Council is aware that most large development opportunities within its boundaries are already allocated as strategic development areas but would like to put forward the following locations which could potentially be reallocated in the future.

- Behind the High Street, private car park and associated industrial land behind it.
- Former Wychwood Brewery site, Eagle Industrial Estate/The Crofts.
- Windrush Leisure Centre site, allowing for a new, greater leisure provision for a larger community.
- A number of smaller grass areas are underused within the town and could potentially be used for community orchards, gardens, and the like.

The Town Council would like to see the Local Plan 2041 be robust and have the power to bring about real change within Witney and beyond. This includes an updated infrastructure strategy containing stronger policies for ensuring proposed developer infrastructure is delivered in line with what is promised or laid out in conditions, and that this is facilitated with proactive rather than reactive monitoring with adequate resources; this could be achieved by the creation of clear quantifiable and enforceable key markers potentially signed off by the planning policy team once delivered.

There is an opportunity to create a lasting holistic vision of the wider area which should include better transport links between the largest and most quickly growing towns – Witney and Carterton, by creating slip-roads from the A40 at Carterton and by championing a designated, segregated cycle lane between there and Witney.

**Resolved:**

That, the above comments be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council

554 **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING R3.0142/23 - SHORES GREEN JUNCTION**

The Council received notice of planning application R3.014223, submitted by Oxfordshire County Council regarding the Shores Green junction in East Witney.

**Resolved:**

That, the application be noted, and any response be provided by the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee at its meeting on 17 October 2023.

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The meeting closed at: 7.41 pm

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Chair