

Committee Objectives and Work Programmes 2025/26
Consolidated Report for Policy Governance & Finance Committee

1. Parks and Recreation Committee
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Projects In Progress:

- **Leys Masterplan:** Partnership project with Courtside CIC for multi-sports hub and café. Construction underway with opening anticipated Autumn 2025. Town Council committed £250,000.
- **Leys Parking Restrictions:** Ongoing discussions with OCC and WODC to support facility development and prevent town centre workers using visitor spaces.
- **Splash Park Renewal:** Replacement facility to open by May 2025 half-term holidays. Funded from EMR account 361.
- **West Witney Clubhouse Refurbishment:** Major refurbishment funded through combination of Loan, S106 contributions, and EMR account 319.
- **Works Depot:** New facility at West Witney Sports Ground. Planning permission granted, Public Works Loan application in process.

Projects in Preparation Pool/Part or Unfunded:

- **Play Equipment Renewals Programme:** £75k budget for 2024/25 - Officers scheduling Programme of Works.
- **Burwell Sports Changing Rooms:** Options being considered with EMR (A/c 368) £47,030 and S106 funding £25,000.
- **Leys Ground Sewerage:** Problems with sewage pipe depth. EMR account 367 stands at £57,900 with additional budget allocation required.
- **Parkrun Path WWSG:** Revised project scope coordinated with potential 3G pitch location. Not fully funded.
- **Green Flag Status Applications:** Preparation for Green Flag applications following Leys Masterplan completion.
- **Playing Fields Maintenance Enhancement:** Enhanced maintenance programme following STRI report recommendations.
- **Cricket at the Leys:** in collaboration with Oxfordshire Cricket Board and Henry Box School to reintroduce cricket at the Leys, including a new artificial pitch [waiting on Courtside construction works to complete – and the changing facilities to be available]
- **Basketball:** To support the development of basketball provision in witney by:
 - Collaborating with OCC on the future of the Cage facility at Witan Way to explore opportunities for Witney Wolves Basketball Club to establish a home base;
 - Review existing WTC-owned recreational facilities and planned projects to assess and integrate provision for basketball where appropriate

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S106 Projects:

- **Raleigh Crescent MUSA:** Multi-Use Sports Area replacing basketball/youth shelters. WTC project managed with s106 funding.
- **Windrush Place Pavilion/Pitches:** Managed by Developers Consortium/WODC. Completion anticipated spring 2026.
- **Windrush Place Adventure Play:** WODC requesting WTC project management. ODS appointed to support.
- **Waterford Road Play Area:** Legal freehold transfer from WODC ongoing with remedial works.
- **3G Pitch:** WODC confirmed West Witney Sports Ground as location. Additional funding needed.
- **Madley Park Play/Teen Zone & Playing Fields:** Working towards transfer under lease. Teen Zone has complex dual agreement expiring 2029.

2. Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee
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Completed Projects:

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- **Corn Exchange Internal Decoration:** Gallery Room, Café/Bar & stairs completed (£4,993)
- **Corn Exchange Storage Solutions:** Additional storage cupboards created
- **Burwell Hall Heating System:** Upgraded (£31,729)
- **Burwell Hall Blinds:** Installed (£2,250)
- **Burwell Hall Toilets:** Ladies & Gents refurbished (£13,152)
- **Burwell Hall Security Upgrades:** CCTV installation completed
- **Madley Park Hall:** Dividing wall/doors issue resolved (£8k)
- **Langdale Hall:** Roof repairs completed (£16k)
- **St Mary's Church Wall:** Substantial wall repairs completed (£34,588)

Projects In Progress:

- **Memorial Maintenance:** Periodic inspections brought in-house. Substantial EMR (A/c 318) set aside.
- **Corn Exchange Door Entry System:** Approved by full Council. Officers refreshing quote to include fire alarm system link.
- **Corn Exchange Seating Sponsorship:** Officers scoping best approach.

Projects in Preparation Pool/Part or Unfunded:

- **St Mary's Church Wall:** Additional restoration work suspended pending budget allocation and faculty approval.
- **Cemetery Access Road:** Relates to Windrush Cemetery internal road. EMR A/c 327 at approximately £150,000.
- **Tower Hill Cemetery Buildings:** EMR 362 of £21,500 for Victorian cemetery chapels maintenance. £10,000 budget for options survey not yet progressed.
- **Corn Exchange Lift Replacement:** EMR 363 of £40k held for replacement when required.
- **Langdale Hall:** Working with tenants on external repairs programme for energy efficiency.
- **Allotment Capacity:** Seeking options to increase capacity. Land requested in North Witney and East Witney developments.
- **Lakeside Allotment Flooding:** Officers to investigate any additional hydrology survey work that may be required; as well as engagement with Thames Water and others to develop a strategy.

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3. Stronger Communities Committee
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Core Service Provision:

- Continue core grant funding for community transport (£23,500) and youth services (£20,000)
- Develop enhanced youth engagement initiatives including potential Witney Youth Council expansion

Infrastructure and Public Realm Enhancement:

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- Prioritise infrastructure replacement programme using available Earmarked Reserves
- Monitor and support High Street upgrades project with OCC
- Consider upgrades to town centre bus shelters outside Barclays Bank and Town Hall
- Address bin provision and placement issues in town centre with WODC
- Review, in conjunction with The Station and Courtside Hubs the provision of an indoor meeting venue for young people

Wayfinding and Visitor Experience:

- Oversee WODC's wayfinding signage project
- Partnership working with Chamber of Commerce to improve Welcome to Witney web pages
- Explore coach parking and drop-off solutions
- Enhance data collection on visitor insights

Community Engagement and Communications:

- Establish enhanced community engagement frameworks
- Explore collaborative projects with local businesses and Chamber of Commerce
- Utilise Town Council communication channels for community feedback

Strategic Planning and Partnership Working:

- Begin strategic planning for local government reorganisation implications
- Strengthen partnership working between government tiers
- Support local businesses advocating for cash payment acceptance

Inclusivity and Environmental Sustainability:

- Embed inclusivity and environmental sustainability as key criteria for project approvals
- Ensure infrastructure improvements incorporate environmental considerations

4. Climate & Biodiversity Committee
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Proposed Committee Objectives for 2025/26:

1. Develop and adopt comprehensive Climate Change Strategy and detailed Climate Emergency Action Plan by October 2025
2. Establish baseline carbon emissions for Council operations and set reduction targets for 2028 carbon neutrality
3. Implement Phase 1 (Baseline Assessment) and begin Phase 2 (Quick Wins, Operational Change) from Action Plan Roadmap

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4. Oversee management of Environmental Spaces with focus on biodiversity enhancement at Witney Lake and Country Park
5. Provide effective oversight of Council's tree stock management for carbon sequestration and biodiversity
6. Develop partnerships for collaborative climate action
7. Promote community engagement and awareness of climate change and biodiversity issues
8. Integrate climate and biodiversity considerations into all Council operations

Proposed Work Programme Areas:

Climate Change Strategy and Action Planning:

- Establish Climate Action Working Party
- Commission full carbon audit of Council operations
- Develop Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- Set specific, measurable carbon reduction targets
- Establish monitoring and reporting mechanisms

Operational Changes and Quick Wins:

- Arrange Carbon Literacy training for staff and Councillors
- Review Procurement Policy to prioritise local, low-carbon suppliers
- Review Events and Hiring Policy for sustainability requirements
- Conduct energy efficiency audits of Council buildings
- Review vehicle fleet for decarbonisation opportunities
- Maintain 100% renewable energy procurement
- Develop climate action handbook

Environmental Spaces Management:

- Review Witney Lake and Country Park Management Plan implementation
- Oversee town-wide tree stock management
- Support habitat enhancement projects including hedgerow management
- Expand wildflower areas across Council-managed land
- Support community orchard projects
- Develop winter tree planting programme

Community Engagement and Partnership:

- Engage with Government, WODC, OCC and stakeholders

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- Develop Council website climate action webpage
- Plan community climate action events
- Launch community consultation on climate priorities
- Develop home energy efficiency resources for residents
- Work on sustainable transport initiatives
- Support renewable energy scheme development

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting:

- Conduct regular progress assessments
- Report to Full Council on implementation progress
- Complete annual carbon emissions assessment
- Prepare annual climate action progress report

5. Policy Governance & Finance Committee

Strategic Oversight Responsibilities:

- Financial management and governance framework oversight
- Major policy decisions and strategic planning
- S106 project oversight and coordination
- Capacity and resource management across committees
- Risk management and compliance monitoring

Key Focus Areas for 2025/26:

- Complete outstanding S106 projects with limited district council support
- Strengthen governance frameworks
- Ensure effective financial stewardship

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- Develop and implement Strategic Plan
- Balance officer capacity with delivery expectations
- Maintain governance standards and financial controls

Ongoing Responsibilities:

- Regular review of committee work programmes
- Resource allocation and prioritisation
- External funding maximisation
- Reserves management
- Long-term financial sustainability planning
- Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements