
Agenda Item: Major Projects Update

Meeting Date: Monday, 30th June 2025

Contact Officer: Project Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update regarding the major projects that are currently underway.

Background

As Members are aware, Witney Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy cited 5x themes to deliver improvements for our community: Parks, Sport, Leisure, Infrastructure & Effectiveness.

This report aims to provide you with an update on the major projects linked to Parks and Recreation, which are: 'Courtside Hub at the Leys' and 'Raleigh Crescent MUGA'

Courtside Hub at the Leys



Current Situation

- Construction work on Padel Courts is underway with foundations completed. Portico (padel court contractor) are onsite and are planned to complete by 15th July 2025.
- Due to Health and Safety regulations the Wheeled Sports Park will be temporarily closed until 15th July 2025 when the padel court building is planned to be completed.

- Courtside and the Principle Contractor have been proactive in keeping the Skatepark open as long as possible and during the week when it was planned to close if no construction work was happening.
- Courtside have also made the Mini-Golf free to use for community during the evenings when the Skatepark is closed. In addition, Courtside has arranged skateboard/scooter lessons on weekends until the Padel Court construction is complete.
- Further proactive engagement of Fernleigh residents has occurred prior to Padel Court construction. This is to mitigate potential complaints as the padel court is 2.5m higher than the main building.
- Courtside have experienced several Anti-Social Behaviour incidents and site trespass over the last few weeks. They are working with TVP to resolve, without impacting on council resource.
- Provisional project completion date remains Autumn 2025

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – n/a
- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to achieve over 100% improvement in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – contractor is now on site, which ensure site security and reduces risk of trespassing, vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials, which will also improve thermal efficiency and reduce energy consumption.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

- Due to previous complaints received from Fernleigh residents, Courtside are proactively engaging the residents prior to the construction of the padel court building to mitigate risk of complaints.
- Officers have ensured that all comms regarding wheeled sports park closure are from Courtside, readers are signposted to Courtside contact details for queries and initial comms are approved by the council. Any comments or complaints received by the council will be sent directly to Courtside.
- Courtside are employing an overnight security guard to protect the wheeled sports park and construction site during the Padel building construction phase. TVP are also involved in supporting in reducing Anti-Social Behaviour and trespass.

- Officers intend to phase the council's £250,000 contribution to Courtside at set milestones that are weighted towards the end of the project, to minimise the risk of any financial loss.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- Increased variety of sports will encourage Witney's residents to exercise and feel the physical and social benefits
- The completion of the Courtside Hub, coupled with new skatepark, mini-golf, renovated splashpad and excellent play area, establishes the Leys as a destination park for the area.

Financial implications

- Witney Town Council's contribution of £250,000 will be segmented and phased in accordance with project milestones and acceptable level of risk.
- Work is underway to renegotiate the lease between the council and Courtside

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

Ralegh Crescent MUGA

Current Situation

- Officers have received clarification from West Oxfordshire District Council on the conditions of use for the S106 money allocated to provide a MUGA at Ralegh Crescent.
- Officers have re-issued the tender document to reflect the S106 requirements for WODC to approve and publish.
- WTC Officers have collaborated with WODC Officers to respond to several complaints from local residents who are concerned with location of the planned MUGA. Officers have captured relevant concerns and included within proposed tender to WODC. Residents have also been given guidance on the formal process they can follow to comment on planning when design and location has been confirmed.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – inclusivity and accessibility to everyone are important design features of this park, which are highlighted in tender and subsequent evaluation process.

- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to deliver above the minimal uplift in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – location is an area subjected to occasional anti-social behaviour, which was raised at consultation events. Officers have asked for this issue to be addressed within the design and lighting/CCTV innovations.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials and lighting will be energy efficient. The Muga specification includes soundproof materials to reduce sound of ball strikes.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

- Differences in Town Council and District Council protocol, processes and cultures could present challenges agreeing tender specifications and transferring ownership to Witney Town Council. Officers are managing risk by learning from previous experience with Play Park and effective comms through robust procurement process and project management.
- Officers recognise that concepts which were presented at public consultation last year will be different to what is being delivered due to S106 spending criteria. Officers are taking relevant feedback from the consultation event to incorporate into the new design scope. In addition, officers are working with WODC officers to re-engage community to reset expectations.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- A key objective of the park is to encourage exercise through fun activities, which attracts users from every segment of the community to encourage social, generational, cultural and physical integration.
- Another key objective is making a safe and fun area for girls to participate in sporting activities.
- The park will address a growing concern of anti-social behaviour in the existing park, due to its covered seating areas, which are poorly lit.

Financial implications

- The project budget is reliant on S106 monies from District Council, which means the town council must work in partnership to deliver project. Robust processes need to be in place to ensure robust contracts are in place and smooth transfer of ownership is achieved.

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated