

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Annual Resident's Survey 2025

Meeting Date: Monday, 21st July 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to present Members with the results of the annual residents' satisfaction survey, conducted between February and May, regarding services overseen by this Committee and external authorities/organisations.

Background

The survey was sent to every household in the post and was promoted online via social media and in the local secondary schools; 344 responses were received in total.

While the number of responses is a very small percentage of the population, the results are still an important resource in advising the Council in which areas projects, communications, and future spending should be considered.

Current Situation

All Council Standing Committees have received reports outlining the scores and comments for services under their remit during the current meeting cycle.

As the Committee with overall financial and policy-making powers, the remainder of the comments include general comments about the town council, its services and those relating to other organisations. These can be seen below:

Please use this space to add more about your experience or feedback regarding any of our services, good or bad.
The services are not that bad
really good
All at Witney Town Council are always extremely helpful
How much of our money did you waste on a report on Facebook terms and conditions as if you can do anything about themget on with your jobs and stop throwing my money away
WTC does a good job generally.
I think they are okay
It would be good if the council would listen to the people when they petition against things for you to actually go with the majority vote as we are the ones living here.
There is nothing for teens to do other than hang around the town and then we get told off for loitering.

It's okay
Witney town council have invested in the town to make open spaces more attractive and inviting.
We moved to Witney 10 years ago from Oxford. Best thing we ever did.
Mobility problems make use of services difficult.
Some areas need some more work
Overall, good service. Thank you.
The cost of your services is horrendous - 66% higher than Banbury town. It would appear a lot of this is waste, such as the losses at the Corn Exchange bar - how much does that cost exactly, I don't see a figure on the leaflet? Are we really to believe that the Corn Exchange now costs us each 25p LESS than it did three years ago? That sounds hopelessly optimistic to me. My other big concern is the vast expense of your empire building. The cost of "Corporate Management" has risen by a staggering 77% over the last three years - SEVEN times the CPI rate of inflation. Despite the huge increase in council tax - 28% in the last three years - the quality of services is no better. The town is run down & tatty & when you do get round to cutting the grass, it would appear that none of your staff have a broom, so the clippings are left in great mounds on the weed-infested footpaths. "Capital Projects" are costing us each £17.72 this year, but there is no explanation of what they are. Are we not allowed to know? At a time when costs are going through the roof, income from "Leased Community Halls" has been consistently going down. Perhaps it's time to find new tenants or repurpose these assets to give us better value? I would appreciate more-honest communication about what our taxes are actually being spent on, even if that means a whole page of boring itemised accounts in the leaflet in place of the vague, nebulous nonsense you currently publish.
Assistance from town councillors even for issues outside direct control and responsibility has been excellent in the past couple of years and the improved accessibility of councillors and communication methods are exemplary. Such a shame the same cannot be said of the District and particularly the County Council.
Stop spending money on vanity projects, listen to residents and reopen the High St.!
As you can see, I don't use any of the services that the town council are responsible for. So I'm REALLY not happy that the council tax goes up (multiple times) quicker than working people's wages. Can only be squeezed so much, until something gives out!
Overall I think you are doing a good job but You are spending huge amounts of money on services which should be provided by other council - what do you get in return? The arguing and back biting from councillors around here is just pathetic and makes me not want to bother voting. Just do what's best for Witney and us!
Seems to me the TC (i.e. the management and staff thereof) do take pride in doing the best possible with finite resources for infinite insatiable demand!
Witney needs a Nando's
kfc and a nando's please and better roads
Astro open please
Its mostly good
none
no
Good services
I don't know
Overall WTC do a good job on a limited budget and remit... keep up the good work - not an easy job to do
its nice
Good

It makes you feel welcomed
Too much many spent on consultations. Get the job done!!
Its good
Just nothing to do could be better
Everything is good
It would be good if all council grass areas especially on Thorney Leys were cut at the same time, not half and half
I think the grass cutting at West Witney should cover the whole area throughout the year to allow our young children an area for games etc.
The crazy golf circuit is badly in need of TLC
Brilliant team at the Town Council. Wonderful efforts are made to keep this town to a high standard and make it such a lovely place to live
A shame WTC is run on party-political lines
Stop your town councillors bickering at each other trying to score points. Work as one not against yourselves
Mobility issues make use of services difficult
Rates are now very high, I would like more detail on where our money goes
Brilliant team at the Town Council. Wonderful efforts are made to keep this town to a high standard and make it such a lovely place to live.

The following comments are concerned with services provided by West Oxfordshire District Council.

Please use this space to add more about your experience or feedback regarding any of our services, good or bad.
The Astro is locked for public use- this gives people my age no chances to play football on good condition grass
Not enough dog poo / litter bins . Many seem to have been removed
Too few bins especially dog waste bins and not emptied enough.
As a wheelchair user, I would welcome better footpaths and more accessible public toilets. I realise this is not a town council responsibility. Please pass on. The [who does what] diagram looks lovely but is not legible. The tint is too dark.
1. Rents for market stalls have become unaffordable to many. Please reduce them. 2. Need adequate policing i.e. traffic wardens - of bad/illegal parking on Bridge St., Mill St., Lower High St., that's responsible for significant queueing esp. on Newland.
Better bigger leisure centre. and more stuff to do like a trampoline park or soft play centre
We need better, free, toilet facilities in public places. We need better sports facilities for all ages.
Lower rates on shops to have more choices - please NO MORE CAFES OR CHARITY SHOPS + especially no barbers
Litter is a big problem in Witney - this town is so lovely! We need a public campaign to stop it now.
I like the displays on Marriotts Walk e.g. Umbrellas + butterflies. Thank you :)
Lacking ladies & gents outfitters now

I believe the streets of Witney town and close to could be cleaner, regular litter picking, more bins along Welch Way, and larger ones around the town.
Could be more bins e.g. by the benches on High Street. Find High St. easier to cross with less traffic as I am somewhat disabled.
The Markets in Marriotts Walk were good. I feel we need a few more Dog Poo bins, have seen poo bags left on the street.
I feel more could be made of Marriot's Walk. Need to attract businesses into empty lots. Maybe create more of a cafe culture with outdoor seating around the cinema end of the place. Witney is crying out for a good quality wine bar and needs better restaurants if we are to stop the decline in Witney's status. I look forward to the high street makeover but feel cars should be allowed down there to ease traffic on Witan Way!
Please more bins for dog poo & rubbish
Better football pitches on ATP2
Always a lot of rubbish - is there a volunteer group established to litter pick?
Shame less bins as they overflow causing littering
The town looks scruffy and unkempt
Astro Open Please
We need better, free toilet facilities in public spaces
More bins and benches please
The benches on Windrush Quay are falling to pieces, and there are no litter bins there so litter goes in the river.
Not you, but I like the displays shops and businesses put on for Witney in Pink, Remembrance Day, etc. Sadly Halloween often not good taste.
Not enough bins
More bins for dog waste required particularly in West Witney, not just by Council offices
More bins on Deer park
Marriotts walk is an absolute wasted opportunity for so much more. There needs to be more rubbish bins.
The markets in Marriotts walk are good. I feel we need more dog poo bins , have seen poo bags left on the street
Not sure who is responsible for the upkeep of Witney buildings, but many of the properties in the High Street are badly in need of maintenance. Perhaps landlords should be called to account. There is no point in having flower troughs and seating with buildings falling apart.
Please could you consider making more recycling bins available rather than everything being in one bin
Make tidying up the town centre a priority, it's a WODC responsibility so get some money from them as they are not doing it
Cleaning streets could be improved
Not being fully aware of which council is responsible for what, it maybe that some of these points are not relevant to the town council The upkeep of grass areas , borders , edges could be better - some areas look unkempt - paths are getting narrower ! Better signage in the town to encourage movement round the time Better publicised information on events being held in the town - more notice on upcoming events Support , encouragement for the high street retailers Information/ tourist centre for visitors

The following comments are concerned with services provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

Please use this space to add more about your experience or feedback regarding any of our services, good or bad.

Complain to OCC: Witney pavements are disgraceful.

There is no policing of the closure of the High St to most cars which is constantly being flouted. Why not impose on the spot fines?

Would rather see more spent on supporting regular Thurs/Sat markets & local shops, rather than remodelling the High Street.

Get rid of the 20mph speed limit and More facilities for younger people and Open up the high street to cars

schools need more support and better trained staff to help hidden disabilities to stay in school and not forgotten.

Would appreciate more repairs to paths etc.

We need more police patrols. Less potholes.

What about the potholes in the roads around Witney and the surrounding villages

Potholes particularly through church

Overgrown footpaths, notified on fix my street, email case closed, no action. Church green benches need attention! Footpaths and hedges need more attention, grass cutting on grass verges not often enough.

Poorly maintained paths in Witney

There are plenty of routes to walk into Witney from Madley - however, none are really pushchair friendly as pure mud baths. So would like more accessible routes. Traffic can be a nightmare along the Woodstock road and Witan Way so tend to avoid going to Witney on a weekend to avoid traffic which doesn't help support local businesses

Lots of areas in Witney need cleaning and tidying properly, roads including A40 are not maintained well, traveller response and tidying needs following up, communication is poor, no need to put cameras on the high street, street and road signs are broken and not maintained properly, rubbish on A40 on route into Cotswolds and POTHOLE! Thank you.

The town is dirty and unkempt. Benches covered in bird poo. Weeds not removed from pavements. Embarrassing when friends visit. Woodford way all the way past the Windrush health centre!

As wheelchair user I would welcome better footpaths

Need adequate policing i.e. traffic wardens - of bad/illegal parking on Bridge St, Mill St, Lower High St, that's responsible for significant queuing esp. on Newland

Get rid of potholes

The paths on High Street and around Burwell/Deer park Road are uneven and unsafe for those with mobility issues

Less potholes

Sort potholes

Find High Street easier to cross with less traffic as I am somewhat disabled

The town centre really has gone downhill since covid. I think closing the High Street was a big mistake & residents should have been consulted first

High St cameras a waste of money. We are ashamed of all the potholes. Visitors to town say it's the worse seen anywhere

potholes: County Council role - put pressure on the role

Overgrown footpaths, notified on fix my street, email case closed, no action. Church green benches need attention! Footpaths and hedges need more attention, grass cutting on grass verges not often enough.
Lobby OCC to Hoover the drains, they ignore them and this leads to greater problems across the town
Better roads
Better safe crossings for school children around schools and in general better maintenance
Poor walking areas I.e. to get from Cogges to Witney country park you need to walk through fields which means they are not very accessible or walk along busy Witan way. Paths could be installed for all year-round use. In addition, there isn't many walking spots in the town despite lots of countryside, for example Tar lakes is lovely but that pathed area is tiny. Also, the path between Cogges and town (2 bridges) is dark at night and as a woman walking to town each evening to the leisure centre, it can feel unsafe in winter months, a bit more lightning would make it a safer route!

The following comments are concerned with policing, and anti-social behaviour.

Please use this space to add more about your experience or feedback regarding any of our services, good or bad.
More police funding desperately needed. It's been over 30 years since under section 74 of the British highways act and 1985 of the Scottish highways act. It's been illegal for any one over the age of 10 to ride a bike on pedestrian footpaths in the UK. This law is not being enforced. Making footpaths dangerous for pedestrians
If this law was enforced the money generated from fines. Could go back into public spending. £60+ on the spot for Breaking the law. £500 for dangerous or re-peat Offenders. Hundreds Could be raised every day. Making footpaths safe for pedestrians
It is also Appalling that there is on signage any where in town Emphasizing this law
There also needs to be more funding for mental health services.
Concerns of anti-social behaviour around Deer Park Field and Town Centre - E-scooters, smoking weed, damage to Playgrounds.
There is inconsistency in the maintenance of the areas under control. Some spaces are spoiled by alcohol and drug users litter. Some spaces become inaccessible.
Other – Woolgate Centre
A bench outside the main Waitrose entrance is needed. There used to be one there!

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 - The residents' survey helps identify service inequalities and amplify underrepresented voices, supporting fairer, more inclusive decision-making. It may also highlight items which need addressing under the Equality Act 2010.
- b) Biodiversity - The Council must ensure any issues are dealt with in line with biodiversity legislation and its own policy.
- c) Crime & Disorder - The survey provides the ability to highlight concerns about safety and anti-social behaviour. The survey can inform targeted responses, resource allocation, and partnership working with police and community safety teams. It may help identify hotspots, vulnerable groups, and areas needing intervention such as the cemeteries.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The survey supports the Council's climate emergency commitments by ensuring resident feedback can help shape relevant policies and actions.

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.

There is a reputational risk if the Council does not address comments received in its satisfaction survey as it will be seen as not listening to residents.

The Council's committees will have competing demands on the overall Council budget so any additional project funding has to be balanced and proportionate. Additions should be in line with Councils objectives and adopted policies/strategies.

Social Value

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

Listening to residents' feedback on Council services delivers significant social value by showing empowerment, inclusion, trust, and community wellbeing; It affirms that their opinions matter and helps building a sense of respect and transparency. This is especially important for the Council, where inclusive decision-making ensures diverse needs are reflected in service design and delivery.

Internally, it supports continuous improvement across the Council's services and helps identify future objectives thereby demonstrating meaningful change.

Financial implications

- There are no new implications from the contents of this report at this point. The Committee may like to consider further projects based on the feedback or increasing/creating budgets for any item.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. What action is required from the results of the survey for services under the remit of this Committee/Council.