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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 7 October 2025

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting via MS Teams - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

Councillors:	J Doughty	J Treloar (In place of D Temple)
	R Smith	

Officers:	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Cara Murray	Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning

Others:	None.
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P602 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Aitman and D Temple, Councillor J Treloar attended as a substitute for the later.

P603 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Planning Application 25/02086/HHD by virtue of knowing the applicant.

There were no other declarations from Members or officers

P604 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representation a local resident concerning planning application 25/02116/OUT. The resident was able to provide additional information regarding research into ancient woodland and surrounding landscape.

The Committee reconvened.

P605 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.

The meeting closed at: 7.02 pm

Chair

archaeological survey be carried out prior to any further work, to ensure that any historically or culturally significant findings are properly preserved with reference to policies EH13 and EH16 of the Local Plan.

However, should this development proceed despite the Town Council's objection, Members urge that the following matters be addressed and incorporated into any future detailed applications. While the site lies within the parish of Curbridge & Lew, Witney is the nearest service centre and will bear the majority of the impact in terms of infrastructure, public services, transport, and community facilities. The Town Council therefore considers it essential that the cumulative effect on Witney is fully assessed and mitigated through:

Sewerage Infrastructure

Witney Town Council passed a vote of no confidence in Thames Water during 2024 due to ongoing and unresolved failures in delivering adequate sewerage infrastructure and capacity improvements at the Witney Sewage Treatment Works. Given these known constraints, the Council believes it is essential that no development proceeds without a full and independently verified assessment of the sewerage infrastructure, with capacity upgrades secured prior to occupation of new homes.

Community Infrastructure, Access, and Contributions

The Town Council highlights the need for timely and guaranteed delivery of essential community infrastructure, secured through appropriate planning conditions and legal agreements. Facilities should include a local shop to reduce car dependency, a flexible community hub to support co-working and social use, inclusive play areas for all ages and abilities, and accessible sports pitches and public open spaces delivered early and maintained to a high standard.

Concerns were also raised regarding the absence of planned pedestrian crossings on the busy Burford Road, particularly near the industrial estate. Safe, direct pedestrian and cycle crossings should be incorporated from the outset to ensure the safety of new and existing residents.

As the main service centre for this proposed development, Witney Town Council seeks Section 106 contributions to support a range of community infrastructure, cemeteries, public halls, heritage, and climate and biodiversity initiatives. Contributions are requested based on a yearly sum per dwelling, multiplied by the anticipated number of dwellings (450), to deliver infrastructure impacted by the development, as follows:

"Sports & Recreation (£60,000)

Improvements to West Witney sports grounds and pitches including funds to facilitate the building of a 3G pitch, ongoing delivery of the Council's Open Spaces Strategy, and upgrading Burwell Hall Changing Rooms/facilities, addressing the lack of sports pitches highlighted in the WODC Playing Pitch Strategy such as additional bowls greens, basketball court provision and a running track. These are in addition to funds requested from WODC for sports pitches and play areas.

"Community (£27,000)

Contributions towards street scene infrastructure such as bus shelters, bins, grit bins, community noticeboards, defibrillators, and benches; provision of services and utilities to allocated allotment land; support for the West Witney Parkrun hogging path, funding towards the community bus route serving the development; and support for the Town Council's detached youth service to meet increased demand from the development.

"Cemeteries (£7,500)

Contribution towards Windrush Cemetery to meet the anticipated demand for

grave spaces and associated layout improvements.

"Public Halls (£7,500)

Support towards the Corn Exchange Community Arts facility serving West Oxfordshire.

"Climate & Biodiversity (£18,000)

Funding for nature recovery and re-wilding works at Witney Lake & Country Park as set out in the Council's Land Management Plan, plus accessibility and further biodiversity improvements across additional Town Council-managed sites.

"Heritage (£20,000)

Contribution towards refurbishment of key historical buildings owned by the Town Council, including Tower Hill Cemetery Chapels, Buttercross, Town Hall, Corn Exchange, and St Mary's Church Carillon and Bell Tower.

Total Sum Requested: £140,000

Clear phasing arrangements should be put in place to ensure that contributions align with housing delivery and that essential services are operational before residents move in.

Additional Infrastructure Considerations

Witney Town Council recognises that existing infrastructure in Witney is under considerable pressure. The scale of this development, combined with other planned growth on Witney's borders, will place additional demand on key public services and facilities.

"Healthcare: The Council requests that any approval includes a clear commitment from the developers to contribute towards new healthcare provision. This would include funding for a new GP surgery or support for the reopening of the Deer Park Medical Centre, ensuring adequate medical services for new and existing residents.

"Education: While primary education provision is currently sufficient, there remains significant concerns about secondary education capacity within Witney. The Council ask that a fully assessed plan of educational needs arising from this development and other nearby proposals is carried out.

"Highways and Transport: Given the rural context and prevalent multi-car ownership, reliance on walking and cycling alone is felt to be unrealistic. Members ask that any development consent is considered alongside substantial upgrades to local highways, including Dry Lane and Crawley village, the development would also increase the need for a West End Link to provide a second river crossing in line with Oxfordshire County Council's transport strategy, to manage the increased traffic and maintain safety.

Socio-Economic Considerations and Future Governance

Given the prospect of imminent local government devolution, this development should be considered in the context of potential parish boundary changes arising from a future Community Governance Review. Long-term planning decisions should account for the likely administrative, social, and service delivery implications for Witney as the main service centre, despite the site being located within Curbridge & Lew Parish.

Conclusion

In summary, while Witney Town Council objects to the principle of this development, it recognises that, if approved, rigorous conditions and planning obligations, including Grampian conditions must be imposed to protect existing residents and ensure new infrastructure, services, and community facilities are

delivered in a timely and effective manner to ensure a sustainable development that safeguards the character and wellbeing of Witney and all its neighbouring Parishes.

605- 4	WTC/112/25	Plot Ref :-25/02273/ADV	Type :-	ADVERTISED
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	01/10/2025
	Location :-	114 HIGH STREET` HIGH STREET	Date Returned :-	08/10/2025
	Proposal :	Installation of non-illuminated fascia, hanging and panel signage.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

605- 5	WTC/113/25	Plot Ref :-25/02274/LBC	Type :-	LISTED BUI
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	01/10/2025
	Location :-	114 HIGH STREET HIGH STREET	Date Returned :-	08/10/2025
	Proposal :	External alterations to include installation of non-illuminated fascia, hanging and panel signage and painting of existing archway.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

605- 6	WTC/114/25	Plot Ref :-25/02264/LBC	Type :-	LISTED BUI
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	01/10/2025
	Location :-	75A HIGH STREET HIGH STREET	Date Returned :-	08/10/2025
	Proposal :	General maintenance and repair works together with proposals to improve the thermal performance of the property, to include internal alterations and replacement roof insulation, repair timber sash and casement windows and glazed timber external doors with the addition of secondary glazing to all.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council supports this application.		
		Members welcome the proposed maintenance and thermal efficiency improvements, particularly the sensitive use of secondary glazing and insulation, and are pleased to see the character and historic features of the listed building being retained and respected.		

605- 7	WTC/115/25	Plot Ref :-25/02265/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	01/10/2025
	Location :-	CAR PARK REAR OF 58 WEST END WEST END	Date Returned :-	08/10/2025
	Proposal :	Conversion of existing building to create 3 no dwelling houses together with alterations and associated works including formation of parking and private gardens.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objection to this application but wishes to submit the following comments for consideration:		
		Members welcome the redevelopment of this brownfield site; however, concerns were raised about potential land contamination due to the site's historic use as a vehicle dismantling and scrap yard. In line with West Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy EH8, the Council recommends that a full contamination assessment be carried out, with any necessary remedial measures clearly identified and implemented. Members also noted the inclusion of garden plots and emphasise		

the need to ensure these areas are safe for residential use, particularly if intended for growing edible produce.

Additionally, Members highlighted Thames Waters comments regarding the need to review the location of public sewers crossing or near the site, to ensure infrastructure is not adversely affected by the development.

The Meeting closed at : 7:02pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council