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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 18 November 2025

At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

Councillors:	J Doughty	R Smith
	G Meadows	D Temple
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Cara Murray	Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning
Others:	No members of the public. Councillor Jack Treloar	

P664 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Aitman.

P665 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

P666 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 16 September, 7 October, and 28 October 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 16 September, 7 October, and 28 October 2025 be approved as correct records of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

P667 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

P668 **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.

P669 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning decisions received from West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC).

The Committee Clerk summarised the reasoning for the decisions that were contrary to the Committee's submission.

Resolved:

That, the list circulated advising of WODC planning decisions be noted.

P670 **DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTION PROJECTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the creation of a developer contribution list for the Council.

Members initially discussed the most appropriate forum for agreeing a list of priority projects which would become a working document. It was suggested that all members of the Council should be directly involved in the collation of the list in order to benefit from their wider expertise, however it was agreed that this Committee was the most suitable committee to develop the initial list which would then be submitted to Full Council for consideration and their agreement.

The Committee expressed their enthusiasm for the reconsideration of a Community Governance review to be carried out by West Oxfordshire District Council given the impact that would be felt from the increase in housing numbers on the boundary of the Witney Parish. It was noted that none of the current strategic planning developments were within the parish and therefore there would be no financial benefits to offset the impact that the town's services would suffer, and the list would place a spotlight on Section 106 and 278 requests which would provide them. They welcomed the response of the Deputy Town Clerk who advised that a report was due to be presented to the meeting of Policy, Governance & Finance on 24 November 2025 on the subject.

Members were encouraged to reflect on potential projects and submit suggestions to Officers, as well as encourage fellow Councillors to contribute in respect of each of their own wards.

During the discussion, a difference of opinion arose between two Members regarding whether the functions performed by the Planning & Development Committee should be regarded as political, with one Member disputing any alternative view. It was noted that although, the Committee was bound to respond to applications in set ways, ideas on larger, more complex matters were often much more varied.

It was proposed by Cllr R Smith, seconded by Cllr D Temple and unanimously agreed that the document be titled *Infrastructure Funding Statement*, in order that it was consistent with the West Oxfordshire District Council named document.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers create an Infrastructure Funding Statement working document for review at a future meeting and ratification at Full Council and,
3. That, the document be reviewed on an annual basis.

P671 NALC RESPONSE TO LICENSING CONSULTATION

The Committee received and noted the correspondence from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) concerning their submission to the consultation on the development of the licensing system, recognising its relevance to the Committee's licensing consultee role.

Members welcomed the response comments made in relation to consideration of an additional licensing objective to address concerns for Health & Wellbeing.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

P672 WODC - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY ADOPTION

The Committee received correspondence from West Oxfordshire District Council regarding the adoption of their Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, which is due to commence on 31 January 2026.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

P673 WODC- LOCAL PLAN 2043

The Committee received correspondence from West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) notifying of their Spatial Options consultation for the Local Plan 2043.

Members agreed it was important for the Council to respond consistently in what it had already been asking of WODC.

Extending the Planning Period

Witney Town Council has no specific comments regarding the proposed extension of the Local Plan period.

Revised Settlement Hierarchy

Witney Town Council recognises the observations made about the character of settlements across the district and the ongoing concerns regarding the potential coalescence of towns and villages. As a Tier 1 settlement, Witney is acknowledged as a main and key service centre for West Oxfordshire. However, despite this designation, no development sites are identified within Witney's existing parish boundaries.

It would be both logical and appropriate for strategic allocations adjacent to Tier 1 settlements, such as land immediately adjoining Witney, to be formally recognised as Tier 1 development sites

in the Plan. Without such recognition, development that directly impacts Witney's infrastructure, services, and residents may proceed without delivering any infrastructure funding to Witney due to current parish boundary arrangements.

To address this imbalance, Witney Town Council requests that West Oxfordshire District Council consider the following as part of the Local Plan process:

- *A Community Governance Review, to explore boundary adjustments that reflect the functional relationship between new development and the town that will serve it.*
- *The creation of a Witney Neighbourhood Committee, or similar mechanism, through which infrastructure funds could be directed to projects benefitting Witney as the district's primary service centre.*

These options would help ensure that the town is not placed under further pressure without receiving an appropriate share of mitigation funding.

Previously Allocated Sites

Witney Town Council urges West Oxfordshire District Council to revisit the status of the 'North Witney' allocation. Although it bears the town's name, the site lies outside the Witney parish boundary. This development will have a substantial and unavoidable impact on Witney residents, road networks, and key services. As such, its delivery must be inseparable from the completion of essential infrastructure, including:

- *Flood mitigation schemes to protect the town and surrounding areas*
- *The West End Link Road*
- *The Northern Distributor Road*

Witney Town Council stresses that development in this location should not proceed unless these critical infrastructure elements are guaranteed and delivered.

New Potential Development Areas

Regarding the proposed employment land at the Peashell Farm site south of Witney, Witney Town Council notes the importance of considering whether this location effectively supports employment growth that aligns with the district's future needs. To inform this assessment, the town council requests that West Oxfordshire District Council undertakes further work on:

- *Local and district-wide demographics, including labour market characteristics*
- *The suitability of the site for emerging sectors, particularly science, technology, and innovation*
- *How this employment land could best contribute to sustainable economic development over the plan period*

A detailed evidence-based report in these areas would help ensure that any employment allocation at Peashell Farm genuinely meets future demand and contributes positively to West Oxfordshire's economic strategy.

Resolved:

That, the above submission be made to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P674 **WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 23 September 2025. A Member present at that meeting confirmed that the minutes were a true representation.

Members were also advised that the Chair of the Stronger Communities Committee had that week written to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) regarding the implementation of the changes to the High Street expressing their concerns regarding the implementation and the suggested street furniture options. An urgent meeting between OCC and the Council had also been requested. The Town Clerk would also be writing to OCC to re-enforce this request.

The Committee also heard of the election of a new Chair to the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 23 September 2025 be noted.

The meeting closed at: 7.29 pm

Chair
