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**Agenda Item:** Strategic Projects - West Witney

**Meeting Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026

**Contact Officer:** Project Officer

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The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update regarding the major capital project that is currently in flight.

### **Background**

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

This report aims to provide you with an update on the major capital projects linked to Parks and Recreation, which is the 'West Witney Project'

### **West Witney Project**

#### **New Depot**



#### **West Witney Clubhouse**



## **Current Situation**

- The West Witney Project combines the construction of a new Works Depot alongside the refurbishment of the existing Clubhouse.
- Construction of the New Depot is complete, and the operations team continue to settle into their new facility and work to organise the depot to improve efficiency is ongoing.
- The only outstanding element in relation to the depot is the installation of a new electricity cable to meet the load requirements of both the depot and the clubhouse. The proposed cable route crosses land owned by a neighbouring company, and therefore requires a legal wayleave agreement to be prepared and executed by both parties. This process is being managed by the network operator, SSEN, with a target completion date of the end of June. Members should note that the timescales for this work are outside the Council's control and are wholly dependent on SSEN. In the interim, to ensure that the electricity demands of both the depot and the clubhouse can be met, the Council has hired a suitable temporary generator pending installation of the new cable by SSEN.
- Once a confirmed opening date for the clubhouse has been established, officers propose to combine the clubhouse opening event with an arranged visit to the new works depot.
- Refurbishment of the clubhouse is nearing completion, with handover to the tenant currently anticipated in mid-June. The refurbishment programme has been subject to a number of delays arising from supply chain issues, contractor management and adverse weather conditions. Officers continue to manage the contractor closely against the agreed programme and the Council has initiated liquidated damages in accordance with the contract in order to recover lost revenue.
- Officers have communicated and where necessary worked closely with sports team users to minimise the impact of project delays. In particular, officers have sought to ensure that Swifts Cricket Team did not miss any scheduled fixtures by identifying alternative grounds and negotiating with the contractor to meet the cost of alternative pitch hire.

## **Corporate Strategy**

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillars of the plan:

2. An Engaged & Supported Community

7. A Green & Resilient Town

## **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 – In accordance with planning conditions the new depot satisfies the required uplift in BNG rating.
- c) Crime & Disorder – security of both buildings have been specified in the tender to ensure the building remains safe and potential thieves are deterred. This includes required ratings of locks, doors and windows together with window bars, external lighting and CCTV.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials, which will also improve thermal efficiency. PV roof panels and air sourced heat pumps have also been included in specification to 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.

- To reduce the risks typically associated with construction projects, the council is working in partnership with Berry's, a specialist construction consultancy. This collaboration provides assurance that the project will deliver value for money, meet the required specifications and be completed within the agreed timeframes
- The council's rigorous procurement protocols and use of financial regulations significantly reduce the risk of engaging substandard contractors, thereby safeguarding public funds from corrective costs and legal disputes.

## **Social Value**

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

- New depot will improve the team's ability to maintain and enhance the valuable services they provide the town. This improves the appearance of the town and its green spaces, making it a cleaner, neater and more pleasant environment for our residents.
- A refurbished, DDA compliant Clubhouse will provide the community with a new modern building to socialise and rent function rooms. It will also provide the community with refurbished changing rooms facilities for sports teams and eliminates the current safeguarding issue restricting its use for youngsters.

## **Financial implications**

- A breakdown of current project costs will be provided to the meeting of the Policy Governance & Finance Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

## **Recommendations**

Member are invited to note the report and provide any feedback.