
Agenda Item:	Terms of Reference
Meeting Date:	Tuesday, 22 nd June 2026
Contact Officer:	Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is for Members to review and recommend terms of reference for the Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

Background

At the Annual Council Meeting (ACM) held on 6th May 2026, it was resolved that terms of reference for each Committee would be reviewed at each meeting in the current meeting cycle.

Current Situation

The current terms of reference for this Committee are:

- a) To receive planning applications and to comment on them in the name of the Council within the time limit set by statute. The Committee may decide, where time for consultation allows, to make a recommendation to the Council on any application considered to have a major impact on the town;
- b) To consider any planning decisions, appeals, planning briefs, and tree preservation orders, and recommend, if appropriate, any views that should be expressed by the Council, or any action that should be taken, in respect of these;
- c) To consider, and submit appropriate representations on behalf of the Council, in respect of applications for justices, gaming, public entertainment and pavement licences;
- d) To consider, and submit appropriate representations on behalf of the Council, in respect of street naming, highways and traffic regulation consultations unless deemed by the Proper Officer of significance to be referred to Full Council;
- e) To consider, and submit appropriate representations on behalf of the Council, in respect of consultations relevant to the sphere of planning and development including forward planning;
- f) To consider and submit appropriate representations on behalf of the Council concerning the potential impact of flooding in Witney, including requests for mitigation measures and comments on sustainable drainage solutions. Due to the serious nature of flooding events, any incidents will be referred to Full Council for further consideration, response, and escalation with other agencies;
- g) To consider the impact on the green environment and biodiversity of all planning applications and comment in the name of the Council accordingly;
- h) To promote sustainable and active travel in the future planning of the town;
- i) To receive and review the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee and address any resulting actions relevant to the Town Council;
- j) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of 5 Members plus the Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights;
- k) The quorum of the committee shall be 4 members

The Committee is asked if it would like to make any amendments to the terms for the forthcoming municipal year.

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 pillar of the plan:

1. A Forward Looking Town Council

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 – no direct implications.
- b) Biodiversity – included in the text above.
- c) Crime & Disorder – the Council has a duty to consider the effects of crime and disorder on its functions. Members consider crime and disorder with their responses for planning and licencing.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – included in the text above.

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. Without clear terms of reference, Council committees risk role confusion, weak accountability, legal challenges, inefficient decision-making, and poor alignment with Council objectives. Clear and regularly reviewed terms of reference are essential for accountable, transparent, and effective committee operations.

Social Value

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

Financial implications

- This Committee has no budgets.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Review the terms of reference; and
2. Consider any changes to the terms of reference; and
3. Recommend such changes be made to Full Council on 13th July 2026.