



**Additional Supplement for:
COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2024**

Agenda No Item

6. Questions by Members.

Written responses to questions raised by members, are included within the additional supplement.

Members are entitled to ask a supplementary question at the meeting if desired, which must arise directly out of the original question or the response to it.

11. Motion A: Winter Fuel Payments – Proposed by Councillor Thomas Ashby, Seconded by Councillor Michele Mead.

The supplement contains a tabled amendment to the original motion, proposed by Councillor Alaric Smith, and seconded by Councillor Andrew Prosser.

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Members Questions & Responses for Council – 25 September 2024

Question	Raised By	Executive Member / Lead Officer	Response
<p>Question 1 – Can the Executive Member for Planning please update the Council on the progress of the Motion passed by Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee on 13 November 2023 concerning World Heritage Site buffer zones?</p>	<p>Councillor Julian Cooper – Liberal Democrats, Woodstock and Bladon.</p>	<p>Councillor Hugo Ashton – Executive Member for Planning.</p> <p>Chris Hargraves – Planning Policy Manager.</p>	<p>The request which was made which was made at the Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee on 13 November 2023, was as follows:</p> <p><i>‘That planning policy officers produce a full and comprehensive report on the Blenheim World Heritage Site, with comparisons made to other World Heritage Sites, to inform the Local Plan review process’.</i></p> <p>Given the time and resource implications of producing such a report, the Planning Policy Manager contacted Historic England to understand whether any such report and comparative analysis already exists.</p> <p>In their subsequent response, Historic England confirmed that there is no single report covering the broad scope of information being sought and that because there is so much detail within World Heritage Sites, higher-level abridgements tend not to be helpful or easy to produce.</p>

			<p>It was therefore suggested that the scope of the request be clarified, and on this basis, Councillor Cooper was contacted by email on 3 July 2024.</p> <p>In his subsequent response of 18 July 2024, Councillor Cooper confirmed that he is particularly interested in the following world heritage sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liverpool• Cornish Tin Mines• Stonehenge• Hadrian's Wall• Lake District <p>He drew particular attention to Liverpool which lost its World Heritage Status in 2021.</p> <p>Since then, a meeting has been held with Historic England on 22 July, the notes of which are now in the process of being provided to Councillor Cooper.</p> <p>The Planning Policy Team have also started to produce a summary overview document relating to Blenheim WHS and the other sites mentioned by Councillor Cooper in his email of 18 July.</p> <p>This will be provided to Councillor Cooper by mid-October 2024.</p>
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<p>Question 2 – In light of a few complaints I have received recently regarding the way this Council manages its trees; in particular the trees on the Deer Park estate in Witney which overhang onto properties in Windrush Valley Road in my ward, and also the woodland at Loom Lane near the Old Bathing Place, would the Executive Member be willing to see that this Council undertakes a review of the Tree Management Policy to ensure it is fit for purpose and meeting the needs of residents?</p>	<p>Councillor Andrew Coles – Labour, Witney Central.</p>	<p>Councillor Lidia Arciszewska – Executive Member for Environment.</p> <p>Bill Oddy – Assistant Director, Commercial Development.</p>	<p>The Council’s Tree Management Policy was adopted in 2019, and this will be reviewed in the next year.</p>
<p>Question 3 – Please can you update us on which Towns benefitted from the UK shared prosperity funding?</p>	<p>Councillor Michele Mead – Conservative, Carterton South.</p>	<p>Councillor Duncan Enright – Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development.</p> <p>Sam Stronach – Economic Development Manager.</p>	<p>There are 5 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) funded projects that are specifically benefiting certain towns. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer Park South accessibility project and trail (Witney); • Carterton Strategic Plan (Carterton); • Hexagon refurb for shared working space (Witney); • Market Towns Feasibility Study (All 7 Towns); • Town Centre improvements (Chipping Norton, with more to come). <p>I have provided a full breakdown of projects and the towns that are benefiting from the scheme, and this</p>

			<p>information is appended to the Member Questions document.</p> <p>Small Business Grants, whilst not directly benefiting, would have an economic impact felt throughout the district.</p>
<p>Question 4 – Quarter one figures show this council is already £250k overspent £91k of this is from people not buying green waste licenses can I ask will you consider reducing the cost of the license next year?</p>	<p>Councillor Michele Mead – Conservative, Carterton South.</p>	<p>Councillor Alaric Smith – Executive Member for Finance.</p> <p>Madhu Richards – Director of Finance.</p>	<p>Income from green waste licenses in 2023/24 was £1,483,443. The latest figure for 2024/25 is £1,614,180.</p> <p>The average price of a green bin licence in Oxfordshire is £63.00. The council currently charges £50.00 which is the second lowest amount of all local authorities in the county.</p> <p>Analysis of the adverse budget monitoring variances, in all areas, will be taken into consideration when setting the 2025/26 budget.</p>

QUESTION 3 – UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND BENEFICIARIES

Project Lead	Status	Project name	Area benefitting
Abingdon & Witney College	Live	Developing careers in hospitality and care and green skills	Whole district
Cotswold Tourism	Live	Help to Thrive	Whole district – sector specific
Cotswold Tourism	Live	Navigate	Whole district – sector specific
Cotswold Tourism	Live	Sustainability Champions	Whole district – sector specific
FarmAbility	Live	FarmAbility	Whole district – by referral
North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster	Live	Feasibility study to develop a farmer-led abattoir, processing and cold supply chain.	Whole district – sector specific
OxLEP	Live	Spark programme	Whole district
OxLEP	Live	Accelerator programme	Whole district
OxLEP	Live	No Limits 3	Whole district
WODC Climate Action Team	Complete	Deer Park South accessibility project and trail	Witney
WODC Economic Dev Team	Complete	Small Business Grant Scheme	Whole district
WODC Economic Dev Team	Live	Carbon Action Fund	Whole district
WODC Planning and Eco Dev Team	Complete	Carterton Strategic Plan	Carterton
WODC Property and Estates	Live	Hexagon refurb for shared working space	Witney
WODC Planning and Eco Dev Team	Complete	Rural Services Feasibility Study	Whole district
WODC Economic Dev Team	Complete	Market Towns Feasibility Study	All 7x towns
WODC Communities Team	Live	WestHive – Communities Infrastructure Fund	Whole district
WODC Economic Dev Team	Live	Town centre improvements	To date: Chipping Norton

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Agenda Item 11

Amendment to Motion A: Winter Fuel Payments, (Proposed by Councillor Alaric Smith, Seconded by Councillor Andrew Prosser).

Amendment with changes shown:

- Words added are in *red text*;
- Words removed are in *strikethrough text*

This Council ~~deplores~~ **notes** the government's decision to ~~cut~~ **means-test** Winter Fuel Payments (WFPs). Age UK estimates that the government's changes to WFPs could hit 2 million people across the country, ~~who~~ **some of whom** badly need the money to stay warm this winter. **This Council also notes the parlous state of the Public Finances that the new Government has inherited.**

This Council resolves to:

1. Request that the Executive considers a report from officers with proposals for ~~launching~~ **promoting** a District awareness campaign working with our local NHS partners, **Parish Councils** and charitable, civic and religious groups, to encourage elderly residents who are eligible for means-tested benefits such as Pension Credit to register and claim them to ensure that they continue to receive WFPs this Winter **and to ensure that those in need are sign-posted to the continuing Household Support Fund**;
2. Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a ~~review~~ **an impact assessment** of the government's ~~precipitous~~ decision to means test WFPs ~~without public consultation~~ and asking HM Treasury to **examine transitional measures** to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who are eligible for, but who do not – or cannot – claim, other benefits under current thresholds are protected from fuel poverty.

If the amendment was passed, the amended motion would read as follows:

This Council notes the government's decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments (WFPs). Age UK estimates that the government's changes to WFPs could hit 2 million people across the country, some of whom badly need the money to stay warm this winter. This Council also notes the parlous state of the Public Finances that the new Government has inherited.

This Council resolves to:

1. Request that the Executive considers a report from officers with proposals for promoting a District awareness campaign working with our local NHS partners, Parish Councils and charitable, civic and religious groups, to encourage elderly residents who are eligible for means-tested benefits such as Pension Credit to register and claim them to ensure that they continue to receive WFPs this Winter and to ensure that those in need are sign-posted to the continuing Household Support Fund;
2. Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging an impact assessment of the government's decision to means test WFPs and asking HM Treasury to examine transitional measures to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who are eligible for, but who do not – or cannot – claim, other benefits under current thresholds are protected from fuel poverty.

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