



Supplement for

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 28TH JANUARY, 2026

Agenda No	Item
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7.	<u>Questions by Members</u> (Pages 5 - 10)
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Member Questions and Responses for Full Council 28 January 2026

Question	Raised By	Executive Member	Response
<p>I am aware that WODC had won a £2.2m grant from the UK Govt (via a wholly owned organisation called Salix) for a project at Chipping Norton Leisure Centre. This funding was awarded under PSDS4 Grant (Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 4) for the replacement of gas boilers with Air Source Heat Pumps. A requirement of the grant was that the gas boilers be classed as end of life or coming to the end of life.</p> <p>My understanding is that WODC have written to the UK Govt to hand money back, shortly after being awarded it last year. I may be wrong, but I do have it on very good authority that the Council has made this decision and are about to write to the government if they haven't already.</p> <p>The grant funding has now been cancelled by central government and no longer exists, with no intent for anything to replace it - therefore, this is no future funding for this type of work.</p> <p>Given Local Government review, as far as I am aware, there has not been an approach to the County Council to discuss the reasons for the money being handed back to the government. I am of the understanding OCC would have supported WODC with resourcing if required. What is the reason for the decision making? It would seem prudent that all avenues are explored before deciding to hand so much money back.</p>	<p>Cllr Thomas Ashby</p>	<p>Cllr Andrew Prosser - Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery</p>	<p>I can confirm that the Council did not hand £2.2 Million back to the UK Government, because the actual funding mechanism that underpins the PSDS Schemes is based on Councils incurring the costs first and then claiming a proportion of this back via agreed milestones throughout the project.</p> <p>The Council did not receive any of the funding upfront, nor had we reached a point to make a claim when the decision was made by Executive Members not to proceed with the project.</p> <p>There are significant differences between the Windrush project and the Chipping Norton Leisure Centre project. The Windrush building is more suitable for its proposed decarbonisation, and as the Council owns the whole of the Windrush site this provides important flexibility for the siting of equipment. The Windrush centre has also benefitted from the installation of solar panels, which do offset the increased electricity running costs, as well as being our most heavily used leisure centre.</p>

<p>I am of the understanding that the decision meeting itself occurred between directors and the Chief Executive, were any Executive Members involved? Were Officers involved? If so, who? I would also like to know when the meeting took place, and for a copy of the minutes to be distributed to members.</p> <p>Additionally, there is a second PSDS project proceeding at Windrush Leisure Centre, and it is unclear as to why Chipping Norton has been cancelled, and Witney is proceeding.</p> <p>Leisure services are a statutory service and will continue beyond LGR in the same building. Therefore, given that the boilers in Chipping Norton are at end of life, the costs for replacements will now need to be picked up directly by WODC or a successor authority.</p> <p>One requirement of LGR is for all Councils to conduct a building condition survey to help inform quicker decision making on properties and budgets post LGR. I am suspecting that recent investment into the leisure centres may be shown by the condition surveys as requiring investment. I would appreciate some further information on these condition surveys and potentially an opportunity to meet with officers to discuss these further, if the decision behind this investment is from the surveys.</p> <p>Therefore, please can the Executive Member explain why £2.2million was handed back to the UK Government?</p>			<p>I will ask Phil Martin to get in touch with you to arrange a briefing meeting about the key areas identified in the condition surveys as requested.</p>
<p>How much has West Oxfordshire District Council spent on legal fees in settlement of subsidence claims in Deer Park since 2000? Please split this response by year and cost.</p>	<p>Cllr Thomas Ashby</p>	<p>Cllr Alaric Smith - Executive Member for Finance</p>	<p>WODC has not spent any money on legal fees as this exposure is insured via the Council's insurance policy. We are not</p>

			aware of any cases requiring legal representation.
<p>A few years ago, West Oxfordshire District Council removed a significant number of public bins across our towns, villages, and hamlets. Considering the ongoing impact on local cleanliness and amenity, will the Executive Member for Environment commit to a district-wide review of bin locations? Furthermore, will the Council guarantee that Town and Parish Councils, who hold the most granular knowledge of their residents' needs, are formally consulted at the very beginning of this process to ensure infrastructure is placed where it is most needed?</p>	<p>Cllr Thomas Ashby</p>	<p>Cllr Lidia Arciszewska - Executive Member for Environment</p>	<p>The Council undertook a significant consultation exercise with Town and Parish Councils before any changes to the public litter bin locations were made. In some cases, additional bins were and still are being installed at their request subject to them also paying for the installation and servicing.</p> <p>The use of litter Bins are already being reviewed constantly by monitoring data from the in-cab system used by Ubico to assess fill levels and applying a traffic light (RAG) score for each bin providing insight into litterbin use, available capacity and positioning.</p> <p>Parish and Town Councils, as well as individual residents, can also offer their granular knowledge of the local needs to alert WODC through the website to particular areas of concern and these reports will be added to the front line data under constant review.</p>

			This holistic approach will ensure infrastructure is in place where needed and more importantly serviced appropriately based on data driven insight.
Please can you provide a detailed update on the progress for the adventure play area at Windrush Place?	Cllr Thomas Ashby	Cllr Tim Sumner Tim Sumner - Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy	<p>The proposed location for the Destination Play Area is a parcel of District Council owned land situated to the south of Deer Park Woods.</p> <p>We are currently exploring the option of commissioning a specialist play consultant through a design and build contract. The intention is for the appointed consultant to undertake a detailed assessment of the site, including analysis of constraints and opportunities, completion of all necessary surveys, a review of existing local play provision, and a full services assessment of the site - particularly in relation to existing electrical infrastructure. Initial quotations have been sought, and our aim is to have consultants appointed by summer 2026.</p>
Please can you confirm the progress on the delivery of the new 3G Pitch at West Witney Sports and Social Club?	Cllr Thomas Ashby	Cllr Tim Sumner - Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy	The 3G pitch project at West Witney Sports Ground is being project-managed by Witney Town Council. The project steering group last met in early December, and the Town Council is currently arranging a meeting with both the

			<p>Football Association and the Football Foundation to obtain clarification on the technical requirements and standards that the pitch must meet.</p> <p>Officers at WODC are also reviewing the Terms and Conditions that will need to be applied to the Town Council regarding the release of Section 106 funding and the future operational management of the facility.</p>
<p>The WODC Voice magazine has recently been sent out to all residents page 9 is all about the Carterton Area Strategy, a working group was set up to work on this strategy but in the last nine months they have only met once so please can you tell me when they are meeting again to progress this strategy?</p>	<p>Cllr Michele Mead</p>	<p>Cllr Tim Sumner - Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy</p>	<p>A meeting of the Working Party will be arranged for the end of February, a range of suggested dates and times has been circulated to the members of Working Party.</p>

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