

# Public Document Pack

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Minutes of a meeting of Council.

Held at Carterton Community Centre, Marigold Square, Shilton Park, Carterton, Oxfordshire,  
OX18 1AX at 1.00pm on **Wednesday 29 November 2023.**

#### PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Coles (Chair), Elizabeth Poskitt (Vice-Chair), Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, Andrew Beaney, Michael Brooker, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Rachel Crouch, Colin Dingwall, Jane Doughty, Duncan Enright, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, Jeff Haine, David Jackson, Edward James, Mark Johnson, Natalie King, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, Andrew Lyon, Charlie Maynard, Martin McBride, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Lysette Nicholls, Mathew Parkinson, Rosie Pearson, Andrew Prosser, Carl Rylett, Geoff Saul, Alaric Smith, Ruth Smith, Harry St. John, Tim Sumner, Liam Walker, Adrian Walsh, Alex Wilson and Alistair Wray.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance), Andrew Brown (Business Manager, Democratic Services), Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Michelle Ouzman (Strategic Support Officer).

#### **CL.109 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from the following Members:

Councillors Rizvana Poole, Alaa Al-Yousuf, Sandra Simpson, Mark Walker, Nick Leverton and Dean Temple.

#### **CL.110 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Thomas Ashby stated that he was Scout Leader at Witney Butter Cross Scout Group. The Declaration of Interest was a non-pecuniary interest, made in relation to Agenda Item 6, where Councillor Ashby had raised a Member Question to the Leader of the Council regarding his Scout group.

Councillor Lysette Nicholls stated that she was Vice-Chair of South Leigh Parish Council. The Declaration of Interest was a non-pecuniary interest and related to Agenda Item 11.

#### **CL.111 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 27 September 2023, be agreed by Council as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chair.

This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by Council.

Council **Resolved** to:

1. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 27 September 2023, as a true and accurate record.

#### **CL.112 Receipt of Announcements**

Councillor Andrew Coles, Chair of the Council, welcomed all attendees to the meeting, and stated it was pleasing to hold a meeting of the Council externally, and thanked Carterton Community Centre for hosting the meeting.

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The Chair thanked and paid tribute to Members who attended Remembrance Sunday services and parades across the district, including those Members who laid wreaths over the Remembrance period.

The Chair also thanked Sharon Ellison and Zena Holliday of WODC Electoral Services for preparing and hosting a “Halloween Spooktacular” in October, which raised £350 for charity. The Chair stated that the event was well attended by Members and Officers, and that the funds raised would be of great help to Charity.

The Chair also thanked the pupils of Tower Hill Community Primary School in Witney, for the design of the Chair’s Annual Christmas Card. The Chair stated there was lots of competition between pupils, and that the winner was worthy of selection.

The Chair also congratulated Councillors Tim Sumner and Charlie Maynard on their appointment to the Executive. Councillor Sumner had been appointed as the new Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects, whilst Councillor Maynard had been appointed as the new Executive Member for Planning and Sustainability. The Chair also paid tribute to Councillor Carl Rylett, who had recently stood down from the Executive, thanked him for his service and wished him well in his new commitments outside of the Council.

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, rose to advise members that Simon Hoare MP, a former Member of West Oxfordshire District Council, had recently been appointed to the Government as a Minister of State. The Leader congratulated Mr. Hoare on his appointment and stated that he would be invited to the opening ceremony of the refurbished Council Chamber at Woodgreen in January 2024. The Leader also stated that Robert Courts MP, Member of Parliament for Witney and West Oxfordshire would also be invited to the event.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, gave an update regarding events that would take place over the Christmas Period of 2023. The Deputy Leader stated that events were detailed in the recently published ‘WODC Voice’ newsletter. The events included a Christmas Market, which would take place at Marriott’s Walk in Witney between 8 and 10 December 2023, with over 30 wooden chalets, offering a range of festive fun and treats.

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for the Environment, advised Council of the successes of ‘Waterways Day’, which took place on 23 November 2023 at The Corn Exchange in Witney. The Executive Member stated that there were a broad range of speakers at the event, such as the Environment Agency, Thames Water and Oxfordshire County Council, and the Executive Member gave thanks to those who attended the event.

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Change, advised that the Council had been awarded £50,000 from the Coronation Orchard Fund. The Executive Member advised that across the district, the Council would be able to support 50 orchards for a variety of different fruits, and the wider, local community would be able to apply for chunks of the funding, by accessing the Council’s website. The Executive Member advised that the deadline for applications was 19 January 2024.

The Executive Member also stated that the Council had launched a consultation on the Biodiversity Action Plan, and encouraged residents to participate in the consultation to help shape biodiversity within the County of Oxfordshire. The deadline for responses was advised of being 22 December 2023 with further information available in the ‘WODC Voice’ newsletter.

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Councillor Joy Aitman, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, advised Council that information relating to WestHive Community Funding was available on the Council's website. The Community Funding had almost reached the end of the first round, with more tranches of funding being available for bidding in due course. The Executive Member encouraged other Members to spread the word to residents about the funding, and how it could be used for projects within the district.

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, announced that the Council, in conjunction with Cottsway Housing Association, had secured an additional 23 units for affordable housing within the district, which would accommodate in the first instance, refugees from Ukraine and Afghanistan. The Executive Member stated that the units had arisen from receipt of Government funding, and at no cost to local residents.

#### **CL.113 Participation of the Public**

There was no public participation at the meeting.

#### **CL.114 Questions by Members**

Questions by Members, as listed on the agenda, and the responses to those questions, which were circulated in advance, were taken as read.

The Chair invited the questioners to ask a supplementary question if they wished and then invited the relevant Executive Members to respond.

The Written Questions, Written Answers, Verbal Supplementary Questions and Verbal Supplementary Answers are detailed in a separate document appended to the Minutes of the Meeting.

#### **CL.115 Recommendations from the Executive**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which sought agreement to recommendations made to Council by the Executive, from its meetings since 19 July 2023.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that Council agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, was put to a vote, and was agreed unanimously by Council.

Council **Resolved** to:

1. Adopt the twenty-six Employment and Health & Safety Policies (included in Annex A of the original Executive report);
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director of Governance, to approve subsequent amendments to any West Oxfordshire District Council employment policies that may be necessary, in line with legal changes and best practice, to ensure the Councils policies remain compliant;
3. Agree to an increase in the fine levels to the maximum levels permissible, as outlined in Table I;
4. Agree an early payment discount as outlined in Table I.

Offence	Existing Fine	Fine with Discount for early payment	New fine (Payment in 28 days)	Fine with proposed % discount (Payment within 14 days)
Fly-tipping	£400	£200*	£1,000	£500
Duty of Care	£400	£200*	£600	£300
Littering and graffiti	£80	£60 **	£500	£250
Distribution of printed matter	£80	£60**	£150	£75

#### CL.116 Recommendations of the Constitution Working Group

Councillor Mathew Parkinson, Chair of the Constitution Working Group, introduced the report, which presented recommendations of the Constitution Working Group relating to the adoption of Budget Procedure Rules and the terms of reference of the Performance and Appointments Committee.

In debate, Members stated that an agreement had been made to keep Budget speeches succinct and to the point when presenting, rather than taking up excessive time during such meetings.

Councillor Mathew Parkinson proposed that Council agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Michele Mead, was put to a vote, and was agreed unanimously by Council.

Council **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the adoption of the Budget Procedure Rules (Annex A) as part of the Constitution (Part 5K);
2. Agree to amend the terms of reference of the Performance and Appointments Committee (Part 3C) to include responsibility for “To adopt and amend employment and health and safety policies”.

#### CL.117 West Oxfordshire District Council Draft Programme of Meetings 2024-2025

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which sought to approve a programme of Council and Committee meetings for the municipal year 2024-25.

The leader paid tribute to the work of the Council’s Democratic Services team, and thanked them for their hard work in producing the draft programme of meetings for consideration by Members, having taken into account different situations throughout the year, such as public holidays and school term dates.

In debate, it was highlighted that the report contained a number of minor anomalies regarding dates of meetings. Members also highlighted that the programme of meetings could clash with

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potential appeals relating to applications for development, and assurance was given that such clashes would be rare, and would be dealt with as appropriate at the time, in consultation with Planning Officers.

Members also stated that proposed meetings were drafted to be on different days of the week that had been previously agreed to, such as Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer, Max Thompson, stated that owing to the anomalies contained within the report, an updated, corrected version would be made available to Members for consideration at the next meeting of Council on 31 January 2024.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that Council note the content of the report. This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, was put to a vote, and was agreed unanimously by Council.

Council **Resolved** to:

1. Note the content of the report.

#### **CL.118 Appointment of Independent Persons**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which sought to appoint Alec Pridsam and Paul Evans as Independent Persons for the purposes of matters of Councillor conduct.

In debate, Members queried if there had been any applications to the position of Independent Persons from females, and that should the application window be re-opened in the future, it would be of benefit to the Council to have a more gender balanced attractive offer made available.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that Council agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, was put to a vote, and was agreed unanimously by Council.

Council **Resolved** to:

1. Appoint Alec Pridsam and Paul Evans as Independent Persons for a period of 4 years;
2. Delegate Authority to the Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer) to extend the appointments for further periods of one year at a time if deemed appropriate.

#### **CL.119 Change of Name - South Leigh Parish Council**

Councillor Andrew Coles, Chair of the Council, introduced the report, which sought to note, make a correction to, and amend a prior agreed name change from 'South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council', to the Parish of 'South Leigh & High Cogges'.

The Chair advised Members that the Ward stated on the report front sheet was incorrect, and that the Parish was actually located in the Eynsham and Cassington Ward.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that Council agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, was put to a vote, and was agreed unanimously by Council.

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- I. Approve the agreed name of the Parish of South Leigh, to the Parish of 'South Leigh & High Cogges'.

**CL.120 Motion A: Accountability of Large-Scale Housing Developers - Proposed by Councillor Lysette Nicholls, Seconded by Councillor Michele Mead.**

Councillor Lysette Nicholls introduced the motion, which requested that the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and all Oxfordshire MPs, informing them that West Oxfordshire District Council would like the criteria for large housing development, once approved, to be enforced, and for developers to incur a financial penalty for not building in the approved timeframe.

In debate, Members stated that there was wide-spread support for the Motion, and that the Council should not be held to account for delays experienced within building processes caused by developers. Members also stated that the letter would help to resolve problems experienced within the planning process and would be backed up by Section 106 agreements contained within applications for development.

Members also referenced that the Levelling Up Bill had made its way through the Parliamentary process and that the Bill made references to ways to support the planning process more generally.

Members also made reference to the importance of the Local Plan, and the work of the Council's Planning Policy Team in the community.

Councillor Lysette Nicholls proposed the motion be adopted by Council. Councillor Nicholls stated her gratitude to all Members for their support of the Motion and the importance of working together on a vital issue. This was seconded by Councillor Michele Mead, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by Council.

Council **Resolved** to pass the following Motion:

- I. This Council feels that some large-scale developers (large scale development is considered to be more than 10 houses as defined by WODC's local plan) need to be accountable for failing to build houses that have been approved by planning. By failing to build in a timely manner this has had a detrimental impact on West Oxfordshire's Local Plan failing.

Council Resolves to:

- I. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and all Oxfordshire MPs informing them that West Oxfordshire District Council would like the criteria for large housing development (defined above), once approved to be enforced, and for developers to incur a financial penalty for not building in the approved timeframe.

**CL.121 Motion B: Market Gardens - Proposed by Councillor Rizvana Poole, Seconded by Councillor Rosie Pearson**

Councillor Michael Brooker introduced the motion, in the absence of Councillor Poole, which requested that the Local Plan Member Working Group gives consideration to the development of a policy or policies in the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041, to positively encourage and support more opportunities for growing and consuming food locally in line with the Oxfordshire Food Strategy.

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In debate, Members stated that work was already ongoing with officers and those employed within the agricultural sector locally to enhance the importance of local food growth.

Members also stated the importance of local action groups working on the subject matter, and that policy additions to the Local Plan would be of use for generations of the future.

Members also praised the work of the Oxfordshire Food Strategy and the work of 'FarmEd' in the northwest of the County for their work in the area, particularly around sustainable farming, and also local Food Action Work Groups.

Ideas for larger scale housing developments being inclusive of recreational allotments were also highlighted, and reference was made to allotment waiting times in the town of Carterton, especially with some gardens being small in size. It was suggested that by developers including allotment space within larger scale developments, it would also help sustainability aims and reduce food waste levels simultaneously.

Members reiterated the importance of policies contained within the Local Plan, and that the Cross-Party Member Working Group would play a vital role in putting forward proposals for adoption within the new Plan.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Rosie Pearson stated the importance of local higher educational settings playing a vital role in agricultural apprenticeships offered to students, and that local employers should also take the subject very seriously.

Councillor Michael Brooker proposed that the motion as set out on the agenda paper, be adopted by Council. Councillor Brooker offered his thanks for the support to the Motion that members had expressed during the debate, and welcomed the idea of allocated allotments within larger scale housing developments. This was seconded by Councillor Rosie Pearson, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by Council.

Council **Resolved** to pass the following Motion:

1. This Council notes that, nationally, we have gone from providing 82.7% of our fruit and veg in 1988 to 55.6% of vegetables and 16.3% of fruit in 2020. Small-scale, low-impact market gardening is an industry that lacks Government support. One of the aims of the Oxfordshire Food Strategy, to which we have signed up, is "to grow our local food economy through local enterprises, local jobs and local wealth creation."

This Council believes that market gardening could be a source of good long-term jobs and is an efficient use of land – In South Oxfordshire, the market gardener Iain Tolhurst produces 120 tonnes of fruit and veg each year on just 7 hectares. This Council further believes that giving priority to healthy local food production addresses at least 4 of the Council's corporate priorities:

- Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All;
- Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife;
- Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency;
- Working Together for West Oxfordshire.

Council Resolves to:

1. Request that the Local Plan Member Working Group gives consideration to the development of a policy or policies in the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041,

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to positively encourage and support more opportunities for growing and consuming food locally in line with the Oxfordshire Food Strategy.

**CL.122 Motion C: Youth Assembly - Proposed by Councillor Rosie Pearson, Seconded by Councillor Andy Graham.**

Councillor Rosie Pearson introduced the motion, which sought to invite all secondary schools and colleges in the District or those who took part in the Youth Needs Assessment to nominate 2 or 3 students (preferably elected by the student body, or drawn from the school's eco-group where one exists) to attend a youth assembly to take part in the Council Chamber in 2024.

The motion also sought to ask that Officers and Executive Members agree on questions to be put to the assembly for discussion, and to agree the finer details of the running of the assembly, with the aim being for assembly members to tell the Council how they would address the climate and nature emergency if they were in charge.

In debate, Members stated that the motion reminded them of previous event days at the Council called "Politics in Action". A number of Members stated their support for the motion and thanked Councillor Pearson for bringing it to Council. It was highlighted that the Council's Communities team were already working on the project, highlighting the importance of involving local schools and youth establishments, and that further information would be available in due course.

Members queried if the schools of Burford and Cokethorpe in the district had been involved in the process and if they had not, strongly encouraged them to be involved in the future, and as part of the current engagement process going forward. Members also stated that other subjects would be key to discussions, such as climate change.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Andy Graham stated his ongoing desire to engage effectively with communities within the district, and that the subject matter would go some way to help achieve this. Councillor Graham also stated that the engagement process could ultimately entice members of the youth community to consider standing for election to the District Council in the future, and that the process would also act as a catalyst to entice further participation and attendance at meetings of the Council and its Committees.

Councillor Rosie Pearson proposed the motion as set out on the agenda paper, be adopted by Council. Councillor Pearson thanked Members for their contributions and for the support of the Motion. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by Council.

Council **Resolved** to pass the following Motion:

- I. This Council notes that our 2022 Youth Needs Assessment, identified that 75% of young people were worried about climate change. In the same survey, 46% of those surveyed felt their voice was not heard. The Council also has aspirations that the newly refurbished Council Chamber will become far more of a community space.

This Council believes that action taken to address climate change can also benefit other aspects of young people's lives, such as mental health, physical fitness and engagement with society. This Council further believes that it would be appropriate to celebrate the refurbishment of our Council Chamber with an event dedicated to the future of our young people.



Council Resolves to:

1. Invite all secondary schools and colleges in the District (OR, failing this, those who took part in the Youth Needs Assessment) to nominate 2 or 3 students (preferably elected by the student body, or drawn from the school's eco-group where one exists) to attend a youth assembly to take part in the council chamber in 2024;
2. Ask that Officers and Executive Members agree on questions to be put to the assembly for discussion, and to agree the finer details of the running of the assembly, with the aim being for assembly members to tell the Council how they would address the climate and nature emergency if they were in charge.

**CL.123 Motion D: Barnard Gate Junction Safety Improvements - Proposed by Councillor Liam Walker, Seconded by Councillor Lysette Nicholls.**

Councillor Liam Walker introduced the motion, which would request that the Leader of the Council write to the Cabinet Member for Transport Management at Oxfordshire County Council, to request that a road safety assessment is conducted at the Barnard Gate A40 junction, and to ask the County Council to act on any suggested safety improvements.

Councillor Walker highlighted the number of accidents that had occurred over recent months at the junction, and the press coverage that the incidents had created. Councillor Walker acknowledged that whilst that the location was not within his own district ward, all Members would be aware of the situations that occur from the junction, its strategic location on the A40, and that West Oxfordshire District Council is the parent local authority, and are the most appropriate body to make representation to the County Council.

Councillor Walker further highlighted an online petition in his name, and thanked those who had contributed for their support in highlighting issues and concerns that the junction raises in its current form.

In debate, many members stated their support for the motion, and members agreed that the junction requires improvements, and that safety assessments would need to be undertaken. It was also highlighted that members of the Council, who also serve as County Councillors, had made representations to the Cabinet Member responsible for the subject matter. It was further highlighted that the Motion may have been more appropriate to be taken to Oxfordshire County Council, and for engagement with Members of the particular County Division and the Cabinet Member with the aligning portfolio.

Members also stated their concerns over the safety of cyclists and pedestrians at the junction, and that they are as much affected by the junction as well as motorists.

Members also highlighted the concerns that residents of the local area have using the junction by accessing the A40 from the villages of Freeland and Hanborough, and the stretch of the A40 is also used as a major commuting route to and from Oxford, to places such as Cheltenham.

Members of the Council acknowledged the increased workload of the emergency services in relation to the junction, when attending accidents and providing lifesaving care. In addition, Members paid tribute to Councillor Michael Brooker for his professional work in this area with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS). Councillor Brooker stated that he had attended the junction numerous times whilst on duty, and that whilst the junction has a notable increase on OFRS's workload, he was in support of the motion.

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Members also recognised that other junctions along the A40 in the district do have similar issues with road safety, and that roads were not the cause of accidents. Members highlighted driving habits of motorists were the main reason for the number of accidents recorded.

Members also highlighted budget constrains at Central Government level had meant that work relating to the junction had been phased and delayed.

Members also noted that the volume of accidents and near misses gained hefty traction on social media platforms connected to the County, and that issues were well documented by the public and press.

Members raised concerns regarding excess traffic within the local area when accidents occur and when the A40 is closed. Surrounding villages are known to become gridlocked as a result, and Members stated that this would need to be taken into consideration when representations are made to the County Council. Members also stated that overall journey times on the A40 were projected to increase over coming years, and that unless improvement work more generally were undertaken, the ongoing issues that are faced, would deteriorate further. It was also suggested that the proposed rail link between Carterton, Witney and Oxford would also help in this area.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Lysette Nicholls stated her gratitude for Members who had stated they would support the motion and those who were supportive of an improvement process to get underway. Councillor Nicholls also alluded to the accident statistics of the junction, and that this was a key indicator in bringing forward recommendations for safety improvement works.

Councillor Nicholls also stated the issues that impact local villages when accidents occur at Barnard Gate, and the effect this has on villages such as Standlake, Stanton Harcourt and South Leigh.

Councillor Liam Walker proposed the motion as set out on the agenda paper, be adopted by Council. Councillor Walker summed up by thanking the Members who had contributed to the debate and those who were supportive of the motion. This was seconded by Councillor Lysette Nicholls, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by Council.

Council **Resolved** to pass the following Motion:

- I. The junction onto the A40 at Barnard Gate has, for some time, been a collision hotspot risking the safety of drivers and cyclists, along with impacting nearby communities when the road has to be closed. This council is concerned by the safety of this junction.

Council Resolves to:

- I. Write to the Cabinet Member for Transport Management at Oxfordshire County Council, to request that a road safety assessment is conducted, and to ask the County Council act on any suggested safety improvements.

The Meeting closed at 2.33pm.

CHAIR

Questions by Members – Council – 29 November 2023

<u>Written Question</u>	<u>Written Answer</u>	<u>Verbal Supplementary Question</u>	<u>Verbal Supplementary Answer</u>
<b>Q1 – Councillor Andrew Lyon to Councillor Joy Aitman, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities.</b>			
<p>In July 2018, the previous administration voted to transfer the freehold of Unterhaching Park, in Witney Central ward, to Witney Town Council. It never materialised.</p> <p>At the Executive meeting in June 2023, my fellow ward representative, Councillor Andrew Coles, asked for an update on the timeframe for transfer and was told that it was 'imminent'. Could I ask the Executive Member when the transfer will be happening please?</p>	<p>Terms have been agreed for some time with Witney Town Council for the transfer of the freehold of the site, and solicitors are instructed by both parties. There have been significant challenges in respect of the legal title transfer due to pre-existing restrictions. These have been complex and difficult to overcome and the additional time has also meant that repairs were required at the site before legal matters of transfer could continue.</p> <p>The Town Council's solicitors do not wish to complete until the Deed of Release of a Routing Agreement, which is registered on the title to the site but should not apply, has been processed by the Land Registry.</p> <p>The application was submitted last October, and our legal team has requested that the application be expedited. This has been accepted. Once this is processed, a completion date can be agreed.</p>	<p>I'd like to say thank you, first of all, for the comprehensive answer, but whilst I appreciate that this problem was not of her making, can I ask her if she understands the deep frustration of residents for the length of time that this task has taken, and heed their eagerness to see an end to this?</p>	<p>Thank you. I should just say that I am on Witney Town Council, and since I joined Witney Town Council in 2019, this has been an ongoing problem, which went back years! I have never been more desperate to get this thing moving along as soon as we can. Work is ongoing to bring the site into better condition and we are just desperate for the situation to be resolved.</p>
<b>Q2 – Councillor Thomas Ashby to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council.</b>			
<p>Witney Buttercross Scout Group is one of the largest Scout Groups in the country with over 400 young people from the ages of 4-18. During this year, members of the Groups Trustee Board have</p>	<p>I am advised that Estates would be happy to re-engage with the Witney Buttercross Scout Group. The previous research resulted in one site of interest at Deer Park, that was not suitable due to covenants on the land preventing use other than as 'public open space' and the intention for future use for Witney Destination</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>engaged the Estates and Asset Team, as well as the Leader of the Council to try and explore pieces of land in Witney and the surrounding area which could be used for camping and outdoor activities. However, discussions have so far not progressed.</p> <p>Please can the Leader of the Council ask relevant officers to engage with members of the trustee board at Witney Buttercross Scout Group, to see if suitable land can be identified for the use of Witney's young people?</p>	<p>Play Area. Officers could now provide ownership plans showing all of the Council's ownership in Witney and work with the Scout Group to review them.</p> <p>It must be noted that most, if not all, of the open land that the Council owns is subject to S106 agreements/covenants on acquisition that prevent use other than as 'public open space'. It is possible to vary S106 agreements and covenants, but the original parties may need to be contacted and be a party to any variation. Any proposal would need detailed legal advice and Planning advice.</p>		
<p><b>Q3 – Councillor Jane Doughty to Councillor Joy Aitman, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities.</b></p>			
<p>I am pleased that after the hard work of local residents and councillors, planning applications for the shops and sports pavilion have been approved on Windrush Place.</p> <p>As part of the Section 106 contributions, there is a significant fund for an adventure play area, which would be of great benefit, not only to young people in my ward, but also the rest of the town. Please can the Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities</p>	<p>Officers have confirmed that £878,489.59 has been received from the West Witney / Windrush Place development (planning app. 12/0084/P/OP). Of this contribution, £180,000 is allocated to the MUGA project at Raleigh Crescent. The S106 agreement specifies it has to go 'towards the construction and on-going maintenance of an adventure play area and a multi-use games area on land owned by the District Council in the vicinity of the Site'.</p> <p>In relation to the adventure play area, I am advised that Officers are working closely with Witney Town Council to determine the best route forward for its delivery. Although there are overhead cables on the proposed land</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

confirm how much S.106 contributions there are, and can they work with officers to ensure that this project begins in the next financial year?	alongside Deer Park Road, which would need to be relocated to enable the project to progress, and this is the next stage of work officers and the Town Council are looking at.		
<b>Q4 – Councillor Jane Doughty to Councillor Joy Aitman, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities.</b>			
<p>In July, the Executive Member confirmed that the District Council held regular meetings to ensure that the land for a Multi-Use Games area in Deer Park.</p> <p>Please can the Executive Member provide an update about how the progress is going and whether land will be transferred to Witney Town Council in early 2024?</p>	I am advised that Officers are working closely with Witney Town Council to bring forward the MUGA at Raleigh Crescent Play Area. The Town Council are amenable to project managing the installation on Council land with the S106 funding allocated. The Town Council has met with designers to discuss design, concepts and cost. On completion ownership will transfer to the Town Council.	Thank you for answering the question. Is it possible that we could have involvement in future meetings as ward members? As you know at the Town Council this has been going on for some while, and we would really like to get this moved on? I would also like to say thank you for your support.	Yes, that's possible. The Town Council are looking at fitting some children's football pitches on the area as well. So there is some negotiation about where these pitches will go.
<b>Q5 – Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for the Environment.</b>			
At the last Executive meeting on 15 November 2023, you collectively agreed to raise the price of fly-tipping fines to the maximum levels allowed. I fully support this decision as like most of us, fly-tipping is in the top things complained about from residents. How many reported fly-tipping incidents in the last year have we successfully fined?	<p>The details of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) and other actions for this year is as follows:</p> <p>Fixed Penalty Notice (Duty of Care) – 1;</p> <p>Fixed Penalty Notice (Littering) – 1;</p> <p>Fixed Penalty Notice (Other) – 0;</p> <p>Fixed Penalty Notice (S33Za) – 16.</p> <p>Of the 18 FPNs, 10 have been paid so far, two are being investigated for prosecution and 6 are pending further action.</p>	Thank you for your response. Can you shed some light on how many fly tipping instances there have been altogether, because all we have here is fixed penalty notices, which is what I asked for, but it would be nice to know how many have been reported throughout the year, and do we have any provision for putting in any cameras to stop any hot spots for fly tipping? I know that we have places that are	<p>Yes, so altogether we had over 1100 instances of fly tipping in a year. That translates to 49 visits that were completed. Now obviously have very limited resources to be able to carry out the investigations.</p> <p>Everything is cleared by Ubico and all the rubbish is picked up, although some of the fly tipped material is very difficult to pick up, including some of the waste having to be picked up from the</p>

		<p>continuously fly tipped like Farmers Field and car parks in Carterton, so it would be nice to know if you're going to put some cameras up to catch fly tippers, now that we can charge them a fortune.</p>	<p>river. These things cost us a lot of money.</p> <p>We now have a new officer who is working with the team to help carry out the investigations, and if we get permission we will install the cameras in the hot spots, and will work closely with Thames Valley Police to bring the overall numbers down and to get a better outcome in our investigations.</p> <p>In October this year, we had altogether 19 investigations undertaken and 8 FPNs were issued. That compared with the last quarter of last year, we only had 2 FPNs issues. So we are doing better and making progress.</p>
<p><b>Q6 – Councillor David Cooper to Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare.</b></p>			
<p>Could the Executive Member confirm how many residents are recorded as homeless in West Oxfordshire?, and how does this compare to years 2020, 2021 and 2022?</p>	<p>West Oxfordshire currently has 2 people recorded as rough sleeping. Both are new to rough sleeping and the Council's Homelessness Team and the County Outreach team are working with both to find solutions. Historically, West Oxfordshire has maintained low numbers of people rough sleeping, preferring to take a proactive approach to find solutions at the earliest possible stage. The Council is required to undertake an annual 'snapshot' estimate and</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

	<p>these figures are recorded with the government as below:</p> <p>2019 – 7;</p> <p>2020 – 5;</p> <p>2021 – 1;</p> <p>2022 – 2.</p>		
<b>Q7 – Councillor Alex Wilson to Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Change.</b>			
<p>What plans does this Council have to install more Electronic Vehicle (EV) charging facilities in West Oxfordshire for the year 2024?</p>	<p>Oxfordshire has been allocated £3.6million of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) to scale up the provision of public EV charging facilities across the County over the next two years. Oxfordshire County Council, as a Tier I Highways Authority, is set to receive this funding and is coordinating a county-wide plan in close consultation with West Oxfordshire District Council and other Oxfordshire District and City Councils on how this money is best spent. The priority for the funding is 'standard' 7kW public charging to meet the changing needs of residents who cannot easily access home charging, either by not having private parking, or perhaps living in rented accommodation. The Oxfordshire proposal will include three key work streams to meet this need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installation of EV charging hubs in Council owned car parks, similar to those delivered in the Park and Charge Oxfordshire project (<a href="http://www.parkandchargeoxfordshire.co.uk">www.parkandchargeoxfordshire.co.uk</a>);</li> </ul>	<p>Thank you very much for the information in regard to the scheme. I just wanted to clarify with Councillor Prosser, how many rural areas, as opposed to Carterton and Chipping Norton will be able to receive their fair share of the scheme, and can he assure me that it won't just turn in charging points for Witney?</p>	<p>So the allocation of sites has not been decided of yet. The final applications are being led by Oxfordshire County Council. Basically that will ensure that one of the criteria for funding for EV Chargers is allocated to rural locations where it is much more harder to economically justify the private sector bringing in charging points, so there definitely will be EV chargers in rural areas, and that will be decided in the coming months by the Government.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with Town and Parish Councils, community halls, schools and other non-profit third parties to install up to 100 'community micro hubs' in rural and/or deprived areas where County, City and District Councils lack suitable parking estate;</li><li>• Installation of on-street EV chargers on the highway where insufficient off-street car parking bays are available.</li></ul> <p>The overall programme is expected to deliver upwards of 1,200 new public chargers across the County, which will be spread fairly and equitably according to where the need is and will look to fill rural gaps in the network. All chargers deployed will have contactless payment facilities, and charging hubs will include a range of specialist bays for EV car clubs, disabled drivers, and van drivers to create a comprehensive network of chargers that will assist people in Oxfordshire to transition to electric more quickly. Oxfordshire also has £700,000 of LEVI pilot funding to help fund up to 500 cable gullies as an alternative solution to allow people without private off-street parking to charge safely at kerbside using a home charger.</p> <p>Getting from plans to live chargers on the ground is a long process involving feasibility studies, securing a new electrical connection and of course groundworks and testing. For this reason, a small proportion of new EV chargers</p>		
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	<p>are likely to go live in 2024 and the whole programme completed by the end of 2025.</p>		
<p><b>Q8 – Councillor Dean Temple to Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects.</b></p>			
<p>The Government, via Sport England, has awarded this council £354,000 for Witney, Chipping Norton and Carterton Leisure Centres. Can you confirm how this extra funding will now be spent?</p>	<p>The Government announced the Swimming Pool Support Fund (Phase One) in the March 2023 Budget and provided a total of £20m to Local Authorities in England as a support package for public leisure facilities with swimming pools. The fund was provided by the Government to help support facilities with swimming pools facing increased cost pressures which could leave them vulnerable to service reduction or at worst closure. The key items highlighted in the grant application were the rise in energy costs, cost of heating, and chemical costs. Subsequently the Government defined that ‘Expenditure relating to energy or chemical use for the Facility’ would be deemed as ‘Eligible Expenditure.’ Once the grant fund has been drawn down from the Government, the Council will use it to directly fund items of ‘Eligible Expenditure’ incurred by the Leisure Operator between April 2023 and March 2024 (the Grant period). The payment claims will need to be supported by evidence of expenditure through invoices and the open book accounting arrangement that is currently in place with GLL Better.</p> <p>Following the receipt of a grant award the leisure operators will also provide financial and performance information, and accurate energy data reports to Sport England to enable further monitoring of the leisure sector and an</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

	<p>evaluation of the impact of the grant funds delivery. As a successful recipient of this grant funding the Council is also required to have in place, or to obtain, a Sport England strategic plan for leisure, or Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (SOPM). The leisure team are currently working in conjunction with consultants to put together this strategy for West Oxfordshire and it is expected to be completed in Spring next year.</p>		
<p><b>Q9 – Councillor Martin McBride to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council.</b></p>			
<p>Please could the Leader confirm how much this administration has spent having Executive meetings on tour, including the cost of venues, travel and officer time?</p>	<p>As you know, this administration has taken meetings of the Executive ‘on Tour’ over recent months, in order to meet with residents of our local communities, and also to allow our residents to ask the Executive the questions they would like answers to. The ‘on-tour’ meetings have also provided the local communities in our district with opportunities to see democracy in action, without the need for them to travel to the Council Offices at Woodgreen.</p> <p>To date, the Executive has held 6 meetings ‘on tour’ in Chipping Norton, Charlbury, Woodstock, Carterton, Eynsham and Burford. Another meeting in Charlbury is planned for 13 December 2023, and Officers are routinely looking at further options for future meetings, at the request of the Executive.</p> <p>In total, the costs of hiring the venues used to host the 7 meetings mentioned above has totalled £681, plus VAT. This has taken into account venue and room hire, the setup of the</p>	<p>Thank you very much for the reply. I was a little bit surprised that we couldn’t get a cost of getting the officers to and from the venues. Once we have the changes made that you have spent £250,000 on in the Council Chamber completed, I would presume that we would not be ‘on tour’ because everything would be available for live streaming. Please could you confirm that will indeed be the situation?</p>	<p>Thank you for the supplementary question. I certainly will be considering that but as you know, at times the room will be used by other parties, such as the Planning Inspectorate, and in those situations if there is a clash, we will actually be looking into possibilities of going elsewhere.</p> <p>But let me just say to you really, this this is not just about having the convenience of a new space, but the whole idea behind this was making it accessible for the community so that they could see the whole democratic process. As for the figures provided to you for your first question, the costs are actually quite nominal, to the impacts</p>

	<p>venues by local staff and any catering costs associated with the meetings.</p> <p>Information about officer time is not readily available. Officers are able to claim 45p per mile and have, wherever possible, shared transport in order to keep associated mileage claim costs to a minimum.</p>		<p>and benefits that this has for our residents.</p> <p>So I kind of think that it would be considered, in the round, and I thank you again for your supplementary.</p>
<p><b>Q10 – Councillor Liam Walker to Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare.</b></p>			
<p>The Executive Member has the responsibility of neighbourhood policing in West Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Can he confirm if he's met with policing teams in the District, and what work is being done between the police and this Council as a result of these meetings?</p>	<p>As Chair of the Community Safety Partnership, I meet regularly with the Police, oversee the development and delivery of a Community Safety Plan designed by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) including the Police, WODC, Oxfordshire County Council, Housing, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Probation services. A new CSP plan is being finalised which includes our response to the new Serious Violence duty.</p> <p>Operationally the Councils Environment and Regulatory Services work alongside the Police regularly on Operations – recently including Modern Slavery, Animal Welfare and Licensing. Officers at the Council also attend the Police-led operational Joint Agency Tasking and Coordination group (JATAC) and Tactical Tasking Coordination group (TTCG) meetings, and our Fraud team also works closely with the Police.</p> <p>Where appropriate we will be proactive and help the Police teams to contribute to wider discussions and connect with other agencies –</p>	<p>Thank you for the response. I wonder if he had the opportunity to attend the Woolbrine Farming Conference at Blenheim Palace recently, and if he did attend, would he be reporting back to Members?</p>	<p>I'm afraid that I wasn't able to attend the event.</p>

	<p>such as linking them with the Carterton Strategic Planning work currently underway.</p> <p>Following direct feedback from residents, I have pushed for more support around Rural Crime and am pleased to announce that the OPCC has bid for on our behalf, and been successful in securing funding from Safer Streets 5 to tackle rural crime. West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse District Councils will benefit from £201,000 to deliver interventions on neighbourhood and rural acquisitive crime.</p> <p>This will include deploying effective signage and property marking products for agricultural equipment, tools and quad bikes and the recruitment of a Rural Crime Advisor who will work across the areas to promote rural crime prevention and engage with rural communities, industries, farms and organisations such as Young Farmers and the National Farmers Union. In addition, there will be a Project Support role based at WODC.</p>		
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