

Tuesday, 23 September 2025

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## COUNCIL

You are summoned to a meeting of the Council which will be held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 1 October 2025 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

Councillors: Andrew Coles (Chair), Carl Rylett, Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, Mike Baggaley, Andrew Beaney, Michael Brooker, Adam Clements, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Sandra Cosier, Steve Cosier, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Genny Early, Duncan Enright, Roger Faulkner, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, David Jackson, Edward James, Natalie King, Liz Leffman, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Andrew Lyon, Paul Marsh, Martin McBride, Stuart McCarroll, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Rosie Pearson, Elizabeth Poskitt, Andrew Prosser, Nigel Ridpath, Geoff Saul, Sandra Simpson, Alaric Smith, Ruth Smith, Tim Sumner, Sarah Veasey, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Adrian Walsh, Alex Wilson and Alistair Wray

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Executive, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Democratic Services officers know prior to the start of the meeting.

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**  
To receive any apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations from Members of Council on any items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 11 - 20)**  
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2025.
4. **Receipt of Announcements**  
To receive any announcements from The Chair, Leader, Members of the Executive, Head of Paid Service, Director of Finance or Director of Governance.
5. **Participation of the Public**  
To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's [Public Participation Rules](#).

The deadline for submission is 2.00pm, two clear working days before the meeting.

6. **Questions by Members**  
The following questions have been submitted by Members of Council to Members of the Executive, in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Constitution Part 5A, Rule 12).

Written responses will be circulated to Members and published on the Council's website at least one working day prior to the meeting. A Member submitting a question is entitled to ask one supplementary question at the meeting which must arise directly from the question or the response to it.

The supplementary questions and answers will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting.

**Question 1: From Councillor Ruth Smith to Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy Executive:** The playing fields at Madley Park in Witney have not been maintained for football or other sports, and therefore have not been used for football or other sports, for a number of years. There was a 2002 agreement between WODC and Wood Green School about their community and school use. The Pitch Playing Strategy and its update provide evidence that Witney's football pitches are used heavily and more are required for training and for matches. We hear from the clubs that this is keenly felt. Please can you give Council an update on WODC's next steps to get football going again on that site?

**Question 2: From Councillor Ruth Smith to Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy Executive:** Local basketball team representatives have been in touch with all 3 tiers of council to express interest in getting the outdoor court at the Windrush Leisure Centre operational as well as indoor courts. Can you please give an update on what steps can be taken by WODC -itself or in partnership with OCC or WTC or Better - to get that outdoor court up to the current

specifications for that sport, in order to unlock another amenity and sport for our area?

**Question 3: From Councillor Ruth Smith to Councillor Andrew Prosser Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery:**

Last year, a number of trees were felled in the WODC Wood Green carpark. Local residents, who witnessed the work, have been asking me questions about the reasons and permissions for felling those trees. Can you please update Council on the process that was followed for that tree work?

**Recommendations from the Executive and the Council's Committees**

**7. Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (Pages 21 - 60)**

Purpose

To consider formal approval of the District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule following independent examination.

Recommendation

The Executive on 10 September 2025 resolved to recommend to Council to:

1. Approve the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule attached at Annex B with an effective date of 31 January 2026 in accordance with Section 213 of the Planning Act 2008.
2. Delegate authority to the Head of Planning to further progress work on the draft CIL Implementation Plan, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning.

**Reports from Officers**

**8. Options for Out of District Investment Property (Pages 61 - 68)**

Purpose

To request Council to consider an officer recommendation to dispose of the out of district property, in accordance with the terms and reasons outlined in the report.

Recommendations

That Council resolves to:

1. Approve the property disposal on the terms detailed in the report
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, to approve the final terms of sale including the sale price.

**9. Recommendations from the Constitution Working Group (Pages 69 - 94)**

Purpose

To present Council with recommendations arising from meeting of the Constitution Working Group held on 17 September 2025.

Recommendations

That Council resolves to:

1. Approve the updated Part 4G: Other Miscellaneous Functions (Annex A)
2. Approve the updated Part 4F: Functions in relation to Planning
3. Approve the updated rules for taking part in planning committees.

10. **Appointments to Working Groups**

Purpose

To inform Council of changes to working group membership made under delegated authority.

Recommendations

That the Council resolves to:

1. Note that Councillor Sarah Veasey has replaced Councillor Adrian Walsh on the Local Plan Working Group
2. Note that Councillor David Melvin has replaced Councillor Lidia Arciszewska on the Local Government Reorganisation Working Group
3. Ratify the changes above.

**Motions on Notice**

Under the 13.4 of the Council's constitution, 60 minutes total is allowed for motions on notice but there is no time limit for each individual motion.

11. **Motion A: Asylum Seeker Community and Council Support - Proposed by Councillor Andy Graham, Seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright**

West Oxfordshire District Council reaffirms

- a) its pride and appreciation in the way our local community has and have come together to support asylum seekers. Local organisations, voluntary groups and our officers have shown professionalism and empathy to the plight of the families staying in the hotel in Witney for short periods while their asylum applications are processed. It has been a good collaborative effort across public sector partners to support the hotel and make sure those staying there are supported as well as local communities. We have seen our communities donate clothes, bicycles and other items to help the predominantly families housed in the hotel. The empathy and compassion shown is a true testament to the strong, inclusive communities we have here in West Oxfordshire.

This Council reaffirms

- b) that there is no room for those who wish to divide our communities by raising fear through misinformation and heightened rhetoric. We believe hotels are not the best form of accommodation in the long term for those seeking asylum and we expect the government will continue to look at alternatives in a pragmatic and measured way to reduce their use. We will continue to work with partners to ensure the hotel is well managed while it remains in its current use.

This Council believes

- c) As it currently stands the Council have no intention of pursuing any planning enforcement against the hotel in Witney as we do not believe there are any planning or other grounds to take enforcement action

12. **Motion B: Tackling the Illegal and Unsafe Use of E-Bikes in West Oxfordshire- Proposed by Councillor Liam Walker, Seconded by Councillor Jane Doughty**

West Oxfordshire District Council notes that the number of e-bikes and e-scooters being used illegally across Witney and the wider district has increased significantly in recent months. Residents, schools, businesses, and community groups have raised

concerns about dangerous riding, use of e-bikes on pavements, the lack of helmets, and underage riders. Illegal and unsafe e-bike use poses risks to pedestrians, other road users,

and to the riders themselves.

The Council also recognises that whilst some successful enforcement has already taken place by Thames Valley Police, local authorities have an important role to play in prevention, awareness, and partnership working to address this issue.

Council resolves to:

1. Work with Thames Valley Police and Oxfordshire County Council to explore options for joint enforcement and awareness campaigns targeting unsafe and illegal e-bike use.
2. Launch a district-wide public awareness campaign to inform residents—especially young people and parents—about the rules around e-bikes, the risks of illegal use, and safe cycling practices.
3. Request the Executive to explore opportunities for funding community safety initiatives such as cycle safety workshops, signage, and school engagement projects.
4. Ask the Leader to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley urging greater prioritisation of enforcement against dangerous and illegal e-bike use in West Oxfordshire.

13. **Motion C: Boosting Workplaces and Young People by Supporting Work Experience in the District - Proposed by Councillor Ruth Smith, Seconded by Councillor Rachel Crouch**

**Recommendation for Council to vote on:**

Council asks the Executive Committee to work with officers and members to develop a simple but effective system for West Oxfordshire employers to be kept aware of the work experience dates for schools in the district, and for employers to be able to indicate willingness to offer work experience places, so that the process is more equitable for young people.

This is an initiative that can outlast Local Government Reorganisation as a valuable piece of local implementation of goals that fall under a wider authority.

**Context for the motion:**

Work Experience forms part of careers education at Key Stages 4 and 5 (year 10-11 and 12-13).

Gatsby Benchmark 6, within Statutory Guidance updated in May 2025 [1], states:

*Every learner should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks [by the ages of 16 and 18].*

In West Oxfordshire, this means that schools release their students for one week of work experience in Year 10 or 11 and in Year 12.

But despite the things the County Council and schools do, families and students still find it hard to know what local opportunities there are with employers.

Many school students find placements with friends and family. Whilst convenient, this is not a level playing field and doesn't necessarily match a student's interests. Schools use their contacts for students who seem to have the most trouble finding their own placement.

Schools have a lead member of staff, trained through the Oxfordshire Careers Hub, run by Oxfordshire Enterprise (Oxfordshire County Council). Each school does things its own way to build relationships with local companies.

West Oxfordshire has the West Oxfordshire Schools Careers Partnership, with well-trained staff at each school and attempts to publicise work experience dates for each school to employers. WOSCP has no web presence of its own; it is cited by schools on their own sites.

We can improve the situation in West Oxfordshire.

This motion seeks, as part of WODC's business-facing responsibilities, in line with its funding commitments to skills training (e.g. WODC's allocation of the UKSPF) and its investment in a Youth Development officer, to help residents find employers in West Oxfordshire employers that offer placements - with a web page that:

- Informs West Oxfordshire employers of all the schools' work experience dates
- Allows expression of interest or pledges of placements to be offered
- Provides a way for employers to promote their participation and how to contact them appropriately
- Retains the autonomy of companies to select their own candidates, but from a platform that signals willingness to engage, and equal opportunity.
- Signposts to and integrates with the initiatives of Oxfordshire Enterprise and the Careers Hub without duplication

Success will be if placements are found more easily and if employers report a boost to their community profile.

Officers may wish to work with schools, WOSCP and the Oxfordshire Careers Hub to shape the most effective format for this project.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools/careers-guidance-and-access-for-education-and-training-providers#benchmark-6-experiences-of-workplaces>

14. **Motion D: The Impact of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill on Local Planning and Environmental Protection - Proposed by Councillor Genny Early, Seconded by Councillor Andrew Prosser**

Council Notes:

1. The Planning and Infrastructure Bill proposes new systems like Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs) and a Nature Restoration Levy (NRL), which would affect how Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) handle development whilst protecting nature.

2. Under the Bill, Natural England will prepare EDPs, with decisions signed off by the Secretary of State for Housing rather than the SoS for the Environment. This takes away local council input, could ignore Local knowledge about wildlife /habitats, end the onsite mitigation and delivery of compensation within the district.

3. The Bill suggests EDPs could replace the need for on-site ecological surveys/ impact assessments, which ensure development doesn't harm protected species or habitats.

4. Since 2024, councils are responsible for ensuring new developments achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which requires developers to carry out habitat surveys, improve biodiversity by > 10%, and manage those improvements for 30 years. The Bill does not replace/remove BNG, but introduces extra layers without explaining how they will work together, risking confusion, duplication, and extra workload for councils.

5. The Government says the Bill will make planning decisions faster for developers, but centralising key decisions, involving the Secretary of State and multiple national bodies

like Natural England, and still needing to consult councils, could increase complexity and time.

#### Council Believes:

1. The Bill should specify how the mitigation hierarchy will be applied so avoidance of harm to nature is always the first priority, closing loopholes that could make compensation the default.
2. Local councils/ communities should continue to play a key role in planning for biodiversity, using local knowledge. Pre-applications enable Local Planning Authorities to work collaboratively with developers to make planning applications and BNG proposals better quality.
3. Removing local control of environmental planning, relying instead on national agencies, could lead to worse outcomes for wildlife, and less accountability. Whilst landscape-scale conservation is needed, the EDP/NRL approach could lead to localised declines in biodiversity.
4. Without on-site ecological surveys/impact assessments, which ensure new developments follow the law and protect nature, information about the loss of locally important populations would not be recorded and national declines in species may be missed or inadequately compensated.
5. Any new environmental systems must be joined up with existing BNG requirements. Councils must get resources to manage them.
6. Species are rarely “blockers” to development - few developments are refused for ecological reasons in West Oxfordshire. However, EDPs could be beneficial if applied to diffuse environmental impacts such as air and water quality, recreational pressure and nutrient neutrality.

#### Council Resolves:

To request that the Leader of the Council writes to the relevant Ministers/local MPs, outlining the Council’s concerns, calling for changes to better protect wildlife while enhancing local democracy and planning accountability:

- Adopt the amendment proposals from CIEEM;
- Keep on-site ecological surveys/impact assessment as a key part of planning;
- Ensure councils are involved in EDPs, to reflect local knowledge and Local Nature Recovery Strategies;
- Explain how EDPs, the NRL and BNG will work together;
- Provide councils with support/funding to do this well.

15. **Motion E: Israel-Palestine - Proposed by Councillor Andy Goodwin, seconded by Councillor Rosie Pearson**

Many residents and community groups of West Oxfordshire have raised concerns about the humanitarian crisis in Israel/Palestine. Some residents are directly affected by the situation with family there.

The situation in Israel / Palestine is appalling. The background is long and complex. Hamas's massacre of innocent Israeli people in October 2023 was heinous. Since 2001, the UK government has imposed comprehensive sanctions on Hamas and its leaders. The UK Government has been proscribed Hamas as a terrorist organisation, it is a crime to belong to or invite support of Hamas. The remaining Israeli hostages must be returned.

The current actions of the Israeli government are unacceptable:

- The UN indicates that the IDF may have systematically violated the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack – fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.
- The UN Human rights office says that the establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem amount to a war crime.
- The IPC (Integrated Food Security phase classification) says more than 500,000 people in the Gaza Strip are facing starvation destitution and death.

The UK government has been critical of recent events, restored funding to UNWRA, committed more aid to Gaza, suspended more arms licences to Israel, and added sanctions on several Israeli ministers and two “illegal settler outposts” in the West Bank.

We ask the Leader of WODC to write to local MPs and the secretary of state to draw their attention to the concerns raised by residents, asking:

- Call for Hamas to end all acts of terrorism and war crimes, to return all Israeli hostages immediately and unconditionally.
- Confirm the UK would execute ICC arrest warrants against those accused of crimes in the conflict if they visited the UK.
- Introduce an arms embargo on Israel, including component parts of military equipment delivered via third parties and apply economic sanctions on all leaders of the Israeli government.
- Stop trade with Israeli settlements in occupied territories, call for the Israeli government to protect citizens of the West Bank from the increased levels of violence and not allow new Israeli settlements in occupied territories.
- Call for the Israeli government to allow international journalists access to Gaza.
- Call for the Israeli government to end their war crimes against Palestinians including: disproportionate use of force in Gaza; planned military operations in Gaza city; restricting aid organisations in delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza; and demolition of infrastructure in Gaza.
- Set up an evacuation scheme for the seriously injured and malnourished, similar to that instigated by the Italian government

This Council:

- Endorses the right of citizens to peaceful protest, including vigils, in the UK and welcomes the ability of communities to challenge and scrutinise decisions taken by elected representatives.



- Requests the Portfolio Holder for Finance to undertake a review of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and where no contrary legal requirement exists, to avoid investing in authorities, institutions or groups that participate in, enable, profit from or legitimise violations of human rights and international law.

**16. Date of Next Meeting**

Purpose

At the previous Council meeting, the Chair used their discretion to schedule an extraordinary meeting, to be held on 22 October 2025 in order to agree the Council's proposal for Local Government Reorganisation. In order to align this with other

Recommendations

That Council resolves to:

1. Agree to move the date of the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 22 October 2025 to 5 November 2025 at 2pm.
2. Agree to move the date of the November Overview and Scrutiny meeting from 5 November 2025 to 4 November 2025 at 2pm.

**17. Exclusion of Public and Press**

If Council wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Council to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Council may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**18. Exempt Annex C for item 8: Out of district investment property (Pages 95 - 96)**

(END)