

Tuesday, 14 July 2026
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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, 22 July 2026 at 2.15 pm.**



Phil Martin
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

Councillors: Carl Rylett (Chair), Joy Aitman (Vice-Chair), Tammy Abarno, Thomas Ashby, Andrew Beaney, Adam Clements, Sandra Coleman, Andrew Coles, Sandra Cosier, Steve Cosier, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Genny Early, Duncan Enright, Sarah Evans, Roger Faulkner, Nick Field-Johnson, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, David Jackson, Edward James, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, Jan Lund, Andrew Lyon, Liam Mackenzie, Stuart McCarroll, Paul Marsh, Hannah Massie, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Toby Morris, Rosie Pearson, Elizabeth Poskitt, Andrew Prosser, Nigel Ridpath, James Robertshaw, Geoff Saul, Sandra Simpson, Alaric Smith, Tim Sumner, Jack Treloar, Sarah Veasey, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Simon Watson, 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 9 - 20)**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2026.
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 Michele Mead to Councillor Liz Leffman, Executive Member for Planning:

How much has been spent on each individual external consultants used for the local plan?

Question 2: From Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Alistair Wray, Executive Member for Environment:

Can you give us an accurate waiting time on replacement requests for garden waste bins as many residents have been waiting 3 months which exceeds the advised 30 working days?

Question 3: From Councillor Simon Watson to Councillor Alistair Wray, Executive Member for Environment:

Fly-tipping enforcement is a contracted Publica service, and West Oxfordshire's Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) rate has previously been reported at 1.15%, compared to 4.04% in the Vale of White Horse over the same period.

Since the change to the household waste recycling centre booking system, a number of residents and Cllrs have raised concerns that fly-tipping may have increased or remained persistently high, as some residents struggle to book tip slots or are deterred from using sites legitimately.

Could the Portfolio Holder please provide:

- a) The total number of recorded fly-tipping incidents in West Oxfordshire for the 12 months to June 2026 (by month), compared with the same 12-month period the previous year;
- b) The number of FPNs issued and the resulting FPN rate for each of these two periods, by month;
- c) Whether officers have identified any correlation between the introduction of the tip booking system and fly-tipping incident levels; and
- d) What steps, if any, are being taken to address fly-tipping where it may be linked to booking system access issues.

Recommendations from the Executive

7. 2025/26 Quarterly Finance Review Q4 (Pages 21 - 50)

Purpose

To report the financial performance of the Council in 2025/26.

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

1. Agree to carry forward the capital budget of £4,395,180. (Paragraph 5.2);
2. Approve the transfers to and between Earmarked Reserves as detailed in the report (Section 4);
3. Approve the necessary budget virements related to Publica Phase 2. (Paragraph 2.27).

8. Appointments to Outside Bodies 2026-27 (Pages 51 - 58)

Purpose

To provide a list of appointments to Outside Bodies for the civic year 2026/27.

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

1. Note the appointments to outside bodies as set out in Annex A.

9. Allocation of Capital Funding For Lift Replacement at Marriotts Walk (Pages 59 - 64)

Purpose

To request approval of the allocation of part of the building maintenance earmarked reserves for the replacement of the lifts at Marriotts Walk, Witney

Recommendation

Subject to the resolutions of the Executive on 15 July 2026, Council is recommended to resolve to:

1. Agree to allocate funding from earmarked reserves to replace the lifts at Marriotts Walk.

10. **Approval of Regulation 19 Draft Submission Local Plan for Public Consultation (Pages 65 - 596)**

Purpose

For Members to consider the proposed pre-submission draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 including the timetable for formally publishing the draft plan in accordance with legislative requirements.

Recommendation

Subject to the resolutions of the Executive on 15 July 2026, Council is recommended to resolve to:

1. Approve the pre-submission draft Local Plan attached at Annex A for the purposes of formal publication for a statutory period of at least 6-weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
2. Delegate authority to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure, to make any necessary minor textual and presentational amendments, and any amendments necessary to reflect any agreed Overview and Scrutiny recommendations, to the pre-submission draft Local Plan, prior to formal publication.

Reports from committees

11. **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2025/26 (Pages 597 - 628)**

Purpose

To receive a report highlighting the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the 2025/26 civic year.

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

1. Note the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2025/26.

Reports from officers

12. **National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions (Pages 629 - 650)**

Purpose

To provide Members with a detailed overview of forthcoming changes to the functioning of Planning Committees in England which will come into effect on 31 October 2026 through The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.

Recommendation

1. Note the report;
2. Request that the Constitution Working Group further consider the implications of the new Regulations and how they need to be reflected in any changes to the Council's Constitution, prior to the Regulations coming into effect on 31st October 2026.

Motions

13. **Motion A: Protecting precious habitats in West Oxfordshire; Proposed by Cllr Alistair Wray, seconded by Cllr Rosie Pearson**
This Council notes:

- The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world; with only about 50% of its biodiversity remaining, it ranks in the bottom 10% globally. It is therefore of utmost importance that the remaining areas of high ecological value are preserved, as they may serve as nucleation sites for the wider nature recovery.
- This is also a matter of urgency. The new Planning and Infrastructure Bill has been created to fast-track the delivery of the government's ambition to build 1.5 million homes by the end of this parliament. This bill allows developers to meet their environmental obligations by making payments to the Nature Restoration Fund to promote nature restoration elsewhere.
- Scientists, wildlife trusts and ecologists are deeply concerned that this new strategy will encourage developers to damage the environment locally and simply 'make up for it miles away'. According to legal analysis of the legislation, more than 5,000 of England's most sensitive and rare natural habitats are at high risk.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are areas of exceptional ecological or geological value that have legal protection. Their designation is one of the most important tools available for protecting the UK's most valuable habitats and species. Designation and management of SSSIs is one of Natural England's key statutory duties, which the Agency seems to be failing to fulfil. The rate of SSSI designations has slowed dramatically in recent years; the average time it takes to designate sites is getting longer. According to experts familiar with the matter, it takes up to 10 years to obtain an SSSI status. Moreover, it now appears that the Agency has suspended processing further designations altogether.
- We have some sites with extraordinary habitats, such as floodplain meadows and ancient woodlands in West Oxfordshire. Our SSSIs include: Alvescot Meadows, Cassington Meadows, Ditchley Road Quarry, Glyme Valley and Middle Barton Fen. They require legal protection. The Council has a legal duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and one of our priorities is to "create a better environment for people and wildlife".
- Given the rapid pace of housing development and the current shortcomings of the Natural England watchdog, the Council should stand up for the local environment and demand answers and actions from the Agency.

The council resolves to:

- I. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to Tony Juniper, the head of Natural England, to ask:
 - a) Why the SSSI designation process has been suspended
 - b) When the SSSI designation will be reinstated
 - c) Request that Natural England adopt a temporary approach to commenting on planning applications, which takes into account available local environmental evidence to protect the sites that would otherwise have been designated as SSSIs if the designation process worked as intended.
 - d) Request that Natural England use this approach until the backlog in the SSSI designation is cleared.

2. Send a copy of the letter to Emma Reynolds MP, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

14. **Motion B : ANPR Assessment of Woodford Way and Witan Way Car Park Usage; Proposed by Cllr Liam Walker, seconded by Cllr Jack Treloar**

Council notes that:

1. West Oxfordshire District Council is progressing proposals that could result in the redevelopment of part of the Woodford Way car park in Witney.
2. Woodford Way and Witan Way are two of the town's principal public car parks and play an important role in supporting local businesses, visitors, commuters and the town centre economy.
3. Decisions regarding the future of public parking should be based on robust, comprehensive and up-to-date evidence rather than limited occupancy surveys undertaken over a small number of days or at specific times.
4. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology is widely used by local authorities to provide detailed information on vehicle movements, duration of stay, occupancy levels and peak demand over an extended period.
5. Collecting data over a minimum five-week period would ensure weekday, weekend, school holiday and event-related parking patterns are properly understood before any irreversible decisions are taken.
6. Residents, businesses, and town centre stakeholders rightly expect major planning decisions affecting public infrastructure to be supported by transparent and reliable evidence.

Council believes that:

1. Any proposal that could reduce public parking capacity should only proceed once there is a clear and independently verifiable understanding of existing demand.
2. A minimum five-week ANPR survey would provide a far more accurate picture of parking usage than short-term manual surveys and would improve confidence in any subsequent planning application.
3. Better evidence will lead to better decision-making and help ensure that the economic vitality of Witney town centre is not inadvertently harmed.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Request that the Executive Member for Environment commissions the installation of temporary ANPR cameras at both the Woodford Way and Witan Way public car parks.
2. Ensure that the monitoring is undertaken continuously for a minimum period of five weeks before any planning application relating to the redevelopment of Woodford Way car park is submitted.
3. Publish the resulting occupancy, including existing data from Marriott's Walk car park, turnover and parking duration data for the three car parks in full, together with an accompanying analysis, so that councillors, residents, and businesses can properly scrutinise the evidence.

15. **Motion C: Ending the "Double Taxation" of Managed Housing Estates; Proposed by Cllr Thomas Ashby, seconded by Cllr Liam MacKenzie**
The Council Notes That:

- Many residents across West Oxfordshire, including those in newer developments in my area, are subject to a system of 'double taxation'
- These residents are legally required to pay their full council tax to local authorities, whilst simultaneously paying mandatory, escalating estate management fees to private companies to maintain public green spaces
- This creates an unfair, two-tier system where residents on unadopted estates pay significantly more for the same or lesser council services than those living on traditionally adopted council-maintained estates
- The current model of leaving public open spaces in perpetuity under private management companies leads to poor accountability, high administration charges, and a lack of democratic oversight

The Council Believes That:

- Public spaces on new housing developments should be viewed as community assets for all residents, and their maintenance should be the democratically accountable to local authorities
- It is fundamentally unjust to charge residents full Council Tax if a local authority is not adopting or maintaining the immediate public open space surrounding their homes

The Council Resolves To:

Adopt a Default Adoption Policy:

1. Ask the Executive and Planning Department to review local planning frameworks, including the Local Plan, to ensure that, moving forward, all new housing estates in the district are adopted by the local authority as a matter of default, provided they meet the standard adoption criteria

Explorer Adoption of Existing Facilities:

2. Set up a cross-party working group to investigate the financial and legal mechanisms required for the Council to adopt existing managed estates, freeing residents from private maintenance contracts

Lobby for Council Tax Relief

3. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and local Members of Parliament, calling for a change in national policy to allow local authorities to legally offer a Council Tax discount or rebate to residents who are forced to pay private estate management fees for unadopted public infrastructure.

Investigate Interim Discretionary Relief:

4. Ask the Executive to request that officers to produce a report on whether any temporary, local discretionary Council Tax relief or hardship schemes can be applied under existing legislation to mitigate the financial burden on affected residents in the interim.

16. **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.

17. **Exempt Annex A for item 9: Allocation of Capital Funding for Lift Replacement at Marriotts Walk (Pages 651 - 652)**

(END)