WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

Executive

Held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 15 July 2026**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham (Chair), Duncan Enright (Vice-Chair), Sandra Coleman, Liz Leffman, Andrew Prosser, Geoff Saul, Alaric Smith, Tim Sumner and Alistair Wray

Officers: Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance and Regulatory Services), Phil Martin (Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service), Andrew Brown (Head of Democratic and Electoral Services), Maria Harper (Democratic Services Assistant), Mathew Taylor (Democratic Services Officer), Caroline Clissold (Head of Housing Solutions), Philip Measures (Service Leader), Kate Seeley (Investigation and Enforcement Manager), Elise Chowdhury, Jasmine McWilliams (Head of Assets), Ana Prelici (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Jack Graham (Environment Support Officer) and Kim Langford-Tejrar (Infrastructure Delivery Lead)

Other Councillors in attendance: David Melvin and Carl Rylett

499 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

500 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader, declared that he was professionally involved in planning work elsewhere in the country and therefore would not take part on the vote or discussion on agenda item 20 – Approval of Regulation 19 Draft Submission Local Plan for Public Consultation. Councillor Enright would leave the room for the item.

501 Minutes of Previous Meeting

There were no amendments to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 June 2026.

Approval of the minutes was proposed by Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, and seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council.

The proposal was put to the vote and was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 June 2026.

502 **Receipt of Announcements**

Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council, thanked those that had attended a successful Carterton Business Breakfast that morning and added that he hoped that this success would be built on in the future.

503 **Participation of the Public**

Corrine Hoge addressed the Executive on Agenda Item 20 – Approval of Regulation 19 Draft Submission of Local Plan for Public Consultation – making the following points:

- The speaker was addressing the Executive on behalf of concerned Burford residents who objected to the inclusion of Policy BU3 in the pre-submission draft Local Plan.
- The speaker's objections were for five principal reasons.
- During the previous consultation, Site N had been unanimously rejected by Burford Town Council and had received over 150 objections. The objections had argued that Site N conflicted with the core NPPF objectives of sustainable development; protection of nationally important landscapes; conservation of heritage assets; safe and suitable access; environment enhancement. The speaker felt that policy BU3 did not address any of those conflicts.
- There had been no formal survey for a car park inclusion, which went against the NPPF requirement for evidence-based planning. Policy BU3 offered no remedy to the issue within Burford of coach parking and ignored the recommendation of the Town Centre Strategy and Needs Assessment Report.
- Policy BU3 conflicted with Policy DM30 (sustainable tourism) and ignored opportunities to develop a sustainable transport hub linked to a parking site with direct access to the A40, and potential sustainable transportation between four significant visitor sites in the area and Burford.
- There was no mention of the Town Centre Strategy and Needs Assessment Report which classified Burford with Woodstock as towns with a significant tourist role.
- Policy BU3 conflicted with Policy DM14 section v (contribute to the quality, unique character and accessibility of the public realm, prioritising pedestrian and cyclist safety and supporting sustainable travel).
- Burford Town Council had recommended two Brownfield sites which would provide an equal number of housing allocations. Policy BU3 proposed to develop on a Cotswold National Landscape site which was against NPPF 145 and 147.
- The speaker requested that the Executive remove Policy BU3 from the pre-submission draft local plan

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, thanked the speaker and advised that the Executive would debate the Approval of Regulation 19 Draft Submission of Local Plan for Public Consultation later in the meeting and that the speaker was welcome to stay for this.

504 **Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Executive noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met on 8 July 2026 to consider Approval of Regulation 19 Draft Submission Local Plan for Public Consultation (item 20 on the agenda).

The comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the response of the Executive had been circulated and published prior to the meeting and would be addressed in more detail at agenda item 20 - Approval of Regulation 19 Draft Submission Local Plan for Public Consultation.

505 **Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee**

There were no matters raised by the Audit and Governance Committee which had met on 25 June 2026.

506 **Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)**

Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, presented the item, the purpose of which was to seek Executive resolution to note, to participate in, and help lead, a joint Thames Valley partnership with councils covering Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Swindon, with an option for Buckinghamshire, to progress the pre-inception phase of work for a Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).

In his presentation Councillor Graham made the following points:

- There was a duty on designated strategic planning authorities to prepare SDSs.
- SDSs were intended to be high-level strategic plans that set out the scale and broad distribution of development and associated infrastructure across multiple planning authority areas.
- It was overdue that such joined-up thinking across geographical areas was taking place, particularly with regard to road networks that crossed districts.
- The paper outlined the key activities that were being progressed, the objectives and the deliverables for the period.
- The paper proposed that participating councils contribute £50,000 from April 2027 onwards towards the cost of the scheme and explained that this was often a function of such partnership working. There would be Leader representation from each partner authority participating.

Councillor Graham proposed accepting the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure, seconded the proposals and noted that it was important to see a joined-up approach to the planning of housing and infrastructure and added that she hoped Buckinghamshire would choose to participate in the scheme due to commonalities between the participators and that county, not least the East-West rail corridor and visitor economies.

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery, commented that with the imminent Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), where many were nervous about the future of democratic oversight, he would prefer to see such schemes in a regional strategic authority which he hoped would progress in the period of the scheme.

The proposals were put to the vote and were agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Note the establishment of a partnership with the councils covering Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Swindon to develop a statutory Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the Thames Valley area (as detailed in section 4 of the report).
2. Note the draft indicative funding and resource allocations for the pre-inception programme.
3. Note that Bracknell Forest Council will act as the accountable body for funds received/held on behalf of the partnership and will host any staff appointed for the Thames Valley SDS programme.
4. Note the interim governance and oversight, monitoring and assurance arrangements set out in this paper, including arrangements for the period before a statutory Strategic Planning Board (SPB) is established through secondary legislation.
5. Note the working arrangements for development of the SDS.
6. Delegate the detail agreements and working arrangements for pre-inception development of the SDS to the Director of Governance and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure.
7. Note that that the Director of Governance and Regulatory Services will provide regular updates at key stages.

507 Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS)

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, presented the item, the purpose of which was to introduce the completed Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) 2026 and seek Executive endorsement of the final document, following its earlier endorsement by the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee (OLJC) in April 2026.

The strategy had outlined the critical, county-wide infrastructure that was necessary to support development and sustainable growth across Oxfordshire through to 2050, which was a necessarily long time frame. It sought to support rather than replicate the Infrastructure

Delivery Plans developed by councils as part of their Statutory Development Plans by focussing upon large strategic infrastructure projects that span or influence a wider area than one district.

In his presentation the Executive Member made the following points:

- The strategy would mean there was a county-wide strategic infrastructure framework.
- The scheme focussed on cross-boundary strategic projects.
- The scheme ensured a shared approach which was evidentially worked though, the scheme also would work as an investment tool and engagement framework for Oxfordshire.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed accepting the recommendation in the report noting that it was important to continue meaningful engagement with the Council's partners to ensure benefits for residents.

Councillor Liz Leffman seconded the proposal and noted that this was a new iteration of a plan that was originally part of the Growth Deal. It provided a new way to evaluate infrastructure across districts and had been endorsed by all Leaders of the District and City Councils. The scheme also had underpinned the SDS and should be considered together.

The proposal was put to the vote and were agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Endorse the final Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) which has already been endorsed by the Oxfordshire Joint Leaders Committee (OLJC) on 24th April 2026.

508 Review and approval of updated Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to present Executive with a revised Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy ('The Policy') for approval and adoption.

The Policy had been reviewed to ensure the content reflected current legislation and the Council's Policies and Procedures.

In his presentation the Executive Member made the following points:

- The Policy was an existing policy that outlined legislation and key roles of members and employees.

- The Policy had been reviewed, and a new section had been inserted regarding the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act to confirm the introduction of the new "failure to prevent fraud" offence.
- Sections had also been added in relation to cyber-crime responsibilities and due diligence activities undertaken regarding tax evasion.
- For ease, in the agenda pack, new text was coloured red and text to be removed was struck through.
- Mandatory fraud awareness training was currently being delivered to all staff within the Council and a session for Councillors was delivered on 9 June 2026.

Councillor Smith proposed accepting the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Andy Graham seconded the proposals.

The proposals were put to the vote and were agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Approve and adopt the Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy attached to this report as Annex A.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance (s151) to approve future minor amendments to the Policy, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, Assistant Director Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, and the Assistant Director Legal Services.

509 Review and approval of Grant Management Policy

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the item the purpose of which was to present the Executive with a new Grant Management Policy ('The Policy') for approval and adoption.

In his presentation the Executive Member made the following points:

- The Council now had a widened scope for the delivery of multiple grant schemes to residents and businesses. Such schemes could be in the form of locally agreed community grant schemes, or via distribution of central government schemes and emergency funding.
- To ensure funding was distributed properly and spent lawfully, the Policy had set out to minimise risk while maximising benefits for the community.
- The Policy had detailed: roles and responsibilities; funding agreements; outcomes; eligibility criteria; assessment and awarding process; conflicts of interest; segregation of duties and due diligence checks.

- The Policy had set out processes to be followed when managing grants, including applying for external funding, developing and launching new grant schemes, verification and due diligence checks and the distribution of funds.
- To mitigate fraud and error, the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit had developed a grant toolkit. This provided guidance on the minimum verification and due diligence checks which must be undertaken.

Councillor Smith proposed accepting the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Andy Graham seconded the proposals.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council, noted that the Policy and the processes proposed were identical to those he had worked with as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Shared Prosperity Fund which had provided grants across the district. In that case the process had worked well, and it was therefore good to see this formalised. Councillor Enright thanked the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit for their work.

The proposals were put to the vote and were agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Approve and adopt the Grant Management Policy attached to this report as Annex A.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance (s151) to approve future minor amendments to the Policy, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, Assistant Director Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, and the Assistant Director Legal Services.

510 **Review and approval of updated Proceeds of Crime and Anti Money Laundering Policy**

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the item the purpose of which was to present the Executive with a revised Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Policy ("The Policy") for approval and adoption.

In his presentation the Executive Member made the following points:

- This was an existing policy that outlined the responsibilities of the Council, the nominated Money Laundering Officer and the approach regarding due diligence in this area.
- The Policy had been refined with revisions or significantly new sections shown as red text in the agenda pack. Any operational or procedural elements relating to disclosure procedure, the reporting Officer's considerations or client/supplier identification process had been removed and were now detailed within the supporting internal procedure document.

- The majority of the other amendments were minor and were shown as red insertions.
- A supporting flowchart had been designed and would be provided to employees during the awareness sessions with a more detailed internal procedure document.

Councillor Smith proposed accepting the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Andy Graham seconded the proposal and emphasised that it was important to continue to review such policies to ensure that they were fit for use. The Policy was available on the website.

The proposal was put to the vote and were agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Approve and adopt the Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Policy attached to this report as Annex A.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance (s151) to approve future minor amendments to the Policy, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, Assistant Director Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, and the Assistant Director Legal Services.

511 Public Spaces Protection Order for Dog Fouling

Councillor Alistair Wray, Executive Member for Environment, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to consider a proposal to consult on the adoption of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to prohibit Dog Fouling.

In his presentation the Executive Member made the following points:

- The proposals sought agreement to launch a public consultation on the introduction of a PSPO on dog fouling in the district.
- It was proposed to make it an offence for a person in charge of a dog to fail to clear up after it.
- The PSPO was intended to help keep streets, footpaths, parks and open spaces clean for residents and visitors to the district.
- The PSPO intended to require owners to carry suitable means of disposal of waste when exercising their dogs
- There were intended to be exemptions for assistance dog users and some people with disabilities.
- Dog fouling could be a health risk in particular to children.

- If adopted the PSPO would provide officers with additional enforcement powers, including issuing fixed penalty notices of £100 and it could lead to prosecution with a maximum fine of £1,000.

Councillor Wray proposed accepting the recommendation in the report.

Councillor Sandra Coleman, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, seconded the proposal and added that she felt that this was a responsible way to tackle such a problem. Councillor Coleman further noted that, while most people were responsible, in some locations this was not the case and the PSPO would provide an effective way to deal with the problem.

Councillor Graham informed the meeting that the consultation would run from 24 July 2026 to 4 September 2026 and invited comments and suggestions from all.

The proposal was put to the vote and were agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Approve the proposal to undertake a consultation on the Public Space Protection Order for Dog Fouling.

512 Our House Funding Extension 2026-2030

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Community Safety, presented the item, the purpose of which was to update members on the ‘Our House’ project with a recommendation that funding be extended from 1 November 2026 to 31 March 2030.

In his presentation the Executive Member made the following points:

- The project had been established in partnership with Cottsway Housing Association and provided accommodation and support for vulnerable young people who were homeless, at risk of homelessness or unable to remain in the family home.
- Specialist support was delivered by Aspire Oxfordshire in order to separate tenancy management and support provision, which had improved outcomes for residents.
- The scheme currently provided accommodation for up to eleven young people across three shared houses in the district.
- Over the last five years the project had accommodated more than thirty young people with the majority having moved into their own homes or returning to the family home.
- Councillor Saul detailed specific numbers of residents who had moved to independent living, gained employment or apprenticeships, were in full-time training and seeking employment. The examples had demonstrated the project’s strong performance.
- The project delivered accommodation at significantly lower cost than traditional supported housing which subsequently had supported access to employment.

- The funding requirement of the scheme was £359,950. The project cost approximately £166 per person per week which had compared favourably against the cost of emergency accommodation. The funding would be met from existing Housing Projects Reserve balances.
- If the project was not extended, notices would have to be given to eleven residents, and the Council may have to provide costly emergency accommodation. Furthermore, residents could face homelessness, rough sleeping or disruption to education.
- The proposal had offered strong value for money, supported the Council's statutory homelessness duties and had improved outcomes for vulnerable young people.

Councillor Saul proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Andy Graham emphasised that residents' lives had been transformed by the support given by such projects and as such the work was important.

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery, seconded the proposals and added that this was an excellent project to support young people with the additional benefit that it reduced costs in the long run as well as the wider cost to society.

The proposals were put to the vote and were agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Approve a 4-year funding extension for the Our House project from 1 November 2026 to 31 March 2030;
2. Agree to continue with the current Support Provider via waiver;
3. Delegate authority to the Head of Housing Solutions, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, to approve any minor amendments to this funding extension;
4. Agree to utilise Housing Projects Reserves as set out in the Proposal in section 4 of the report.

513 Allocation of Capital Funding for Lift Replacement at Marriotts Walk

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, presented the item, the purpose of which was to request approval of the allocation of part of the building maintenance earmarked reserves for the replacement of the lifts at Marriotts Walk, Witney.

In his presentation the Executive Member made the following points:

- The financial detail to the report was contained in exempt annex A. Discussion of this detail was not required in public session, though it had been considered by the Executive.
- The proposal was that the lifts would be replaced on one contract but not at the same time. The option of planning lift replacements on a one per year basis was discounted as this would take the last lift past end of life and increased the cost of the scheme overall, ongoing maintenance and part replacement costs.

- There was an option to recharge part of the lift replacement cost to the retail and residential tenants of the centre. This would challenge the viability of the scheme for the occupiers as the tenants currently had a high service charge burden compared to other similar schemes as they were responsible for the costs of the multi-storey car park which was usually met by car parking charges in other areas of the country.
- The centre was a contributor to the Council's income which funded services for residents. In 2025/26 Marriotts had made a net contribution to the Council's finances of £454,890. This was a significant source of revenue and an important contributor to the town and therefore current improvements and maintenance were required.

Councillor Smith proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council, seconded the proposals.

Councillor Andy Graham reassured the meeting that the lifts were safe but did need to be replaced and that the replacement projects would minimise disruption to residents and the centre users.

The proposals were put to the vote and were agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Recommend to Council to allocate funding from earmarked reserves to replace the lifts at Marriotts Walk
2. Delegate authority to the Director Finance in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance to approve the final cost of works and use of contingency up to the full amount detailed at Annex A.

514 Section 106 Spending Authorisation

Councillor Liz Leffman, Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure, presented the item, the purpose of which was to, consider whether future decisions on the expenditure of Section 106 (S106) funds secured towards Witney Town Centre improvements should be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director of Finance.

In her presentation the Executive Member made the following points:

- This report sought delegation of authority to authorise spending of two specific S106 financial contributions relating to Witney Town Centre improvements to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director of Finance. The specific S106 agreements were: £319,308.47 from planning permission ref. 13/0345/P/FP for 36 houses at Springfield Nurseries, Curbridge Road, Witney; and, £346,956.20 planning permission ref. 12/0084/P/OP for 271 houses at Downs Road, Witney.
- The contributions could only be spent on improvements within Witney Town Centre to comply with the terms of the agreement and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended).

- Projects that were intended to be funded by the S106 contributions were: a Wayfinding project; Marriotts Walk Public Realm enhancement and the Oxfordshire County Council-led Witney town centre improvements.
- As this financial contribution was to be spent by the District Council itself, as opposed to the usual process of passing funds to a third-party organisation, Executive authorisation was required for spending decisions.
- The report sought to delegate the decision in order to:
  - a) allow projects to progress with certainty of funding;
  - b) prevent delays in releasing s106 funding;
  - c) be responsive to time-critical factors which could otherwise block or stymy the projects.
- It was noted that, for one of the contributions, work must have been contracted by October to release the funds.

Councillor Leffman proposed accepting the recommendation of the report.

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, seconded the proposal.

Councillor Andy Graham added that the report had highlighted the benefits that would be seen in Witney Town Centre from the funds, which would improve the town centre experience for residents and businesses and continue the Town's success.

The proposal was put to the vote and agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Delegate authority to the Council's Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure, for making future decisions on the expenditure of Section 106 developer contributions relating to the improvement of Witney Town Centre.

515 Exclusion of Press and Public

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, proposed that Executive agree to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the remaining exempt items of business, on the basis that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 to:

Exclude the press and public from the meeting 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, with the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighing the public interest in disclosing the exempt information.

516 Proposals for sale of land in Witney

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, presented the item, the purpose of which was to request approval for sale of land in Witney.

Councillor Alaric Smith proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Andy Graham seconded the proposals.

The proposals were put to the vote and were agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Approve the sale of land in Witney;
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance to approve the final terms of the sale including sale price.

517 Item 15 - Allocation of Capital Funding for Lift Replacement at Marriotts Walk - Exempt Annex A

This item was taken as read during the public part of the meeting and was not considered in private session.

518 Approval of Regulation 19 Draft Submission Local Plan for Public Consultation

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council, left the room for the duration of this item.

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, began the item by explaining that, as the meeting was in public, and given the importance of the Local Plan, he wanted to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to participate in the process in accordance with the Council's Constitution. Councillor Graham continued by outlining the order in which the item would be dealt with: an introduction to the report and the recommendation before the Executive; Non-Executive Members of the Council would be given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments followed by responses from Executive Members and Officers; consideration of the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and finally

the Executive debate on the report and a decision on the recommendations in the report.

Executive

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Councillor Liz Leffman, Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure, then presented the item, the purpose of which was 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.

In her presentation the Executive Member made the following points:

- The recommendation proposed in the report was that the Executive recommend that Council approves the Plan for statutory public consultation.
- This was an important milestone in what had been a thorough, evidence-led and transparent process that had taken place over several years.
- The Executive were not being asked to adopt the Local Plan. The recommendation was requesting that the Executive recommended to Council that the Publication Draft be approved for a six-week statutory consultation before it was submitted for independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.
- The Local Plan had provided the framework for how West Oxfordshire would grow and develop to 2043. The Plan was about more than housing. It had planned for employment opportunities, schools, healthcare, transport, walking and cycling infrastructure, utilities, flood mitigation, green spaces, community facilities, renewable energy and the protection of our natural and historic environment.
- Without an up-to-date Local Plan, development did not stop. Instead, decisions became increasingly driven by national policy and speculative planning applications. This would reduce the Council's ability to shape where development took place and the quality of that development. The Plan gave the opportunity to plan positively and ensured that growth happened in the right places and in the right way.
- One of the defining principles of this Local Plan was that development must be supported by infrastructure. Ensuring that new homes were accompanied by the services and facilities communities needed—schools, GP surgeries, roads, public transport, walking and cycling routes, water and wastewater capacity, electricity networks, green infrastructure, parks, leisure facilities and digital connectivity.
- Growth must create sustainable communities, not simply larger settlements. The Plan would be backed by an extensive Infrastructure Delivery Plan and a wide range of technical evidence that identified what infrastructure was needed, who was responsible for delivering it and, where possible, when it should come forward.
- The Plan also recognised that growth should be phased. Development was expected to come forward progressively across the Plan period rather than all at once, which allowed infrastructure, environmental capacity and community services to be delivered alongside new development. This coordinated approach was fundamental to creating places where people can thrive.
- The Plan had been shaped through extensive programmes of public engagement.
- The Plan would be supported by a comprehensive evidence base, that would include a sustainability appraisal, habitats regulations assessment, housing and employment

assessments, settlement sustainability work, transport studies, water cycle studies, flood risk assessments, viability assessments and numerous other specialist reports.

- The Publication Draft was both legally compliant and capable of meeting the National Planning Policy Framework's four tests of soundness. It had been positively prepared, was justified by proportionate evidence, was capable of being delivered effectively and was consistent with national planning policy.
- If approved by Council, the next stage was a six-week statutory public consultation. Representations in the consultation should focus on whether the Plan was legally compliant and whether it was sound. Respondents should explain which policies or allocations they were commenting on, why they believed the Plan is or is not legally compliant or sound, and, where appropriate, what changes they considered necessary. Anyone could respond to the consultation. Each representation received would be submitted alongside the Local Plan and supporting evidence to the Secretary of State.
- An independent Planning Inspector would then examine the Plan, consider all duly made representations, hold public hearing sessions where necessary and determine whether the Plan was legally compliant and sound. If modifications were required, these would be consulted upon before the Inspector issued a final report. Only after that process would Council be invited to consider adopting the Local Plan.
- The Plan was infrastructure-led, evidence-based and had been designed to ensure that growth was sustainable, planned and supported.
- Councillor Leffman thanked everyone who had contributed to the Plan preparation: officers, specialist consultants, statutory partners, parish and town councils, infrastructure providers, members of the Executive, all councillors and the many residents and organisations who had taken the time to engage throughout the process.
- Councillor Leffman drew the Executive Members' attention to the Addendum Report, which was published as a supplement to the item. The Addendum Report included officer responses to further comments, including from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for consideration by the Executive.

Councillor Andy Graham added that the development of the Plan had been very complex and had taken considerable time to get to this point. Councillor Graham reiterated that the consultation was intended to allow residents and businesses the opportunity to comment on specific areas that were known best to them. He reminded that some aspects of the Plan were governed by national guidelines.

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, then invited non-Executive Members of the Council present to address the Executive with any questions, comments or suggestions that they may wish to provide.

A non-Executive Member made the following points and suggestions for consideration by the Executive and Officers:

- In reference to green infrastructure, given the recent heatwave, it was suggested that the Plan should include measures to avoid developments being barren of nature and

free of trees. Further policies around the use and maintenance of sustainable drainage systems for environmental benefit was suggested.
- For solar panels, it was suggested that policies should include specifics on the responsibilities for decommissioning these. In addition, further measures to protect bats were suggested, as this was a species particularly effected by solar panels.
- Policies concerning Construction Waste Management Plans should include specifics around what these must contain.
- It was noted that master planning developments could be beneficial and should include engaging residents. This could lead to acceptance of growth more readily by communities. It was suggested that masterplans should be required for developments of more than 200 dwellings, and that the Council should be the body that approved masterplans.

Councillor Graham requested Officers to respond to the Member's comments and the following points were raised:

- Some of the points raised were adequately dealt with in the Plan. Other comments were reflected in the Addendum Report.
- Regarding green infrastructure, it was felt Policy DM1 had dealt with this adequately and had made specific reference to this.
- An amendment to the plan detailed in the addendum added an additional requirement on the decommissioning of solar farms.
- For both Construction Waste Management Plans and Master Plans the point was taken that refinement could be made on defining these. It was suggested that this could be dealt with in the Addendum Report and glossary to the Plan.
- With regard to bats, Officers considered that the Nature Recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain Policies dealt with the protection of such protected species.
- Officers reminded all that representation should be made through the consultation process going forward.

The Executive then addressed the six recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 8 July 2026. A supplement of the recommendations and responses had been published prior to the meeting.

- Six recommendations had been made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Three recommendations had been accepted in full (1, 2 and 4), and the changes resulting from these to the Plan were detailed by Councillor Graham and could be seen Addendum.
- There was partial agreement to recommendation 3, with recognition that the text of the draft Plan in relation to Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land could be revised to ensure more consistency with national policy.
- The Executive had not agreed to recommendation 5 requiring the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) be available before Full Council on 22 July. Executive Members noted that this document was important and underpinned the Plan, however it was not a statutory requirement. The Executive gave reassurance that this document would be available for the consultation process. Furthermore, it was noted that the IDP would be informed by the feedback from the consultation itself and could be an evolving document.

- The Executive had not agreed to recommendation 6, that an example of a specific business being relocated in Policy WIT6 be removed. Officers commented that this reference was hypothetical and its inclusion was to demonstrate what could happen in that area. There was no inference in the text that this would or must happen and the owners of the business were able to submit comments in the consultation.

The Executive then addressed other questions and recommendations made by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which were included in Annex D – Local Plan Addendum Report, which had been published prior to the meeting.

Prior to the Executive debating the item, Councillor Graham acknowledged the work on the plan of former Councillors Hugo Ashton and Lidia Arciszewska, noting that they had both made significant contributes.

The Executive then debated the plan and made the following points. It was noted that comments made by the Executive would be picked up and dealt with separately to the recommendations of the report:

- Policy CP4 could be strengthened to include a presumption in favour of developments and infrastructure being adopted by the local authority or utility provider.
- Policy CP5 could include a statement that public sewers being at capacity was not justification for use of non-mains drainage.
- Policy DM12 could highlight a move towards centralised waste management arrangements which would improve waste handling efficiency.
- It was noted that the consultation would provide the first opportunity to see the evidence base and the Plan together.
- It was acknowledged that the housing figures, set by Government, were demanding and the Plan was attempting to meet these. The housing figures were a challenge to deliver with the existing infrastructure. It was hoped the IDP would help tackle this.
- On the Local Plan Addendum Report (Annex D) the following points were suggested:
    - Page 12 – There should be no net loss of biodiversity. Therefore paragraph 1 could remove words “where possible”.
    - Page 12 – Point 2, replace “minimise” with “prevent water pollution”.
    - Page 12 – Point 2 - typographical error should read “River Glyme”
    - Page 12 – Point 2 - add River Windrush to list protected designated sites
    - Page 12 – Point 2 – should read “river or tributary upstream”
    - Page 15 – There should be no impact to air quality allowed by developments. References to development located within or near an Air Quality Management Area needs to reference any development that could “impact” such an area.
    - Page 16 – Council include references to tributaries and impact on air quality management areas.
    - Water Policies CP5 and DM10 need to be specific on the impact of large energy or water users such as data centres.
- The updated Plan was an important upgrade and update on the current adopted Plan.
- Some of resident’s concerns that had been provided to Members were contradictory.
- The Plan could bring forward more land for employment.
- The Plan could develop and seek to extend existing health centres.

- Encouragement could be given for express bus services to Oxford for rural settlements with proposed growth in housing e.g. Chipping Norton.
- Recent research findings had shown that only half of local plans required new buildings to have cooling and ventilation strategies. Against the background of the recent weather an acknowledgment was requested that new builds should be required to have such strategies.
- Requests were made to tightening aspects of sports provision in particular settlements and to be more specific about provisions.

All points raised by Executive Members would be taken away and considered by the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure and Officers. Where appropriate these would be reflected in an updated Addendum Report which would be updated and published in advance of the Full Council meeting.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed accepting the recommendations of the report, with an amendment to recommendation 2 which would enable changes resulting from the Addendum Report document to be included in the Plan.

Recommendation 2 would now read as follows:

"Recommend to Council that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure, to make any necessary minor textual, factual and presentational amendments to the pre-submission draft Local Plan, together with any amendments required to reflect agreed recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including as set out in the Local Plan Addendum Report (Annex D), prior to formal publication".

Councillor Graham concluded by confirming the process and approximate timeframes for the consultation and subsequent examination. Councillor Graham and Officers explored the weight that could be attached to the Plan as it moves thorough the process. Officers advised that this was hard to quantify however broadly the document attracted more weight, contingent on the number of representations that it had received, as it goes through the process.

Councillor Liz Leffman seconded the proposals.

The proposals were put to the vote and were agreed unanimously.

The Executive resolved to:

1. Recommend to Council to 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. Recommend to Council that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure, to make any necessary minor textual, factual and presentational amendments to the pre-submission draft Local Plan, together with any amendments required to reflect agreed

recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including as set out in the Local Plan Addendum Report (Annex D), prior to formal publication..

3. Agree that the Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex B be published online and made available in hard copy format in agreed 'deposit' locations across the district.

The Meeting closed at 4.06 pm

<u>CHAIR</u>