

Member Questions and Responses for Full Council 16 September

Question	Raised By	Executive Member	Response
I. <u>New Witney 3G</u> Please can the Executive Member provide a detailed update on the following West Witney Projects: • Witney 3G at West Witney Sports Ground • Adventure Play Area (Windrush Place S106 Funding) • Raleigh Crescent MUGA The lack of serious progression is a serious concern amongst residents, therefore a detailed update on all three will be greatly appreciated.	Councillor Thomas Ashby	Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Arts, Culture and Sports	<i>Witney 3G at West Witney Sports Ground</i> Work is progressing on this Witney Town Council led project, with the most recent Steering Group meeting in July. Since July, officers have been completing preparatory work with the Football Foundation to establish the technical requirements for the pitch and review comparable facilities. This work is informing the preferred design, including pitch orientation, accessibility and future operation. Officers have also reviewed Biodiversity Net Gain requirements to determine the ecological surveys needed to support a planning application. Progress is being made across the technical, design and environmental aspects of the project and subject to the outcome of this, a planning application is anticipated in early 2027. <i>Adventure Play Area</i> Assessment of the original site south of Deer Park Woods has identified a number of constraints, including utilities infrastructure and ecological considerations. As a result of this, officers have concluded that the site is no longer suitable. As the Section 106 agreement requires the facility to be delivered on District Council-owned land, alternative sites are now being explored in the vicinity of the development. Once a suitable location has been

			identified, the Council will procure a specialist play consultant through a design-and-build contract to develop and deliver the project. As site selection remains ongoing, it is not yet possible to provide delivery timescales. Further updates will be provided once a preferred site has been agreed. <i>Raleigh Crescent MUGA</i> Work is also progressing on this project. The Steering Group most recently met at the end of August to review progress. Since then, tender documentation has been prepared and work has continued to identify the most appropriate procurement route, ensuring compliance with the Section 106 agreement and Council procurement requirements, as the Section 106 requires the facility to be delivered on District Council-owned land. Subject to agreement of the procurement approach, the formal procurement process is expected to commence within the next month. <i>Summary</i> While much of the work to date has focused on planning, design and compliance, these are essential stages in ensuring these projects are deliverable, compliant and provide value for money. WODC and its partners remain committed to progressing the projects and will provide further updates as key milestones are reached.
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<u>2. Estate Maintenance</u> For several years I have been working to secure the sensible and sustainable estate maintenance Deer Park requires. While we made progress initially, the last few years have seen a significant decline in substantial works. On 14 January this year, I was informed that substantial works would commence in Deer Park this autumn. However, I was recently informed that due to some trees failing because of the hot weather, some of these works may now be delayed until the start of the next financial year. This is unacceptable. The start of the financial year is April which is well within the nesting season and would therefore mean the works could not commence until this time next year. Please can the Executive Member ensure, by working with the Chief Executive and Tree Officer, that Deer Park is prioritised for the estate maintenance it requires. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent on subsidence claims over the years, and residents are rightly concerned that largely, tree pruning has not been undertaken significantly in 30 years.	Councillor Thomas Ashby	Cllr Alaric Smith - Executive Member for Finance Cllr Liz Leffman, Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure	The Council has agreed a budget of £80,000 for essential tree work during 2026/2027. Of this, around £41,000 has already been spent with a further £38,000 currently committed to further essential works during this financial year. These further essential works do not currently include the trees along Deer Park Road. However, following further discussions between Officers, it has been agreed that an additional money will be made available during this financial year to enable the necessary works to be undertaken in their totality. With regards to the point made relating to the cost of subsidence claims, the suggested figure of several hundred thousand pounds is a significant over-estimated and Cllr Ashby has previously been provided with an accurate record of expenditure in February of this year. It should also be noted that the money was paid by the insurers.
<u>3. Local Government Reform</u> Please can the Executive Member outline, in detail, what discussions/engagement has been held with Town and Parish Councils regarding 'Asset Transfer' ahead of Local Government Reform. Many councils are suffering from anxiety by not knowing what assets	Councillor Thomas Ashby	Councillor Andy Graham Leader of the Council	Assets Team officers frequently engage with Town and Parish Councils regarding West Oxfordshire owned land and property. Officers are open to discussions regarding the future ownership of public open space land but there would not be any obligation for Town and Parish Council's to take on any responsibilities in

and services may be heading their way, therefore, any direction the Executive Member can outline would be greatly appreciated.			respect of these sites. This has been clearly communicated to Town and Parish Councils, and there are no plans to change this in the context of Local Government Reform, so they do not need to suffer any anxiety.
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