

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Minutes of a meeting of the **Executive.**

Held in The Upper Hall, Chipping Norton Town Hall, High Street, Chipping Norton,  
Oxfordshire OX7 5NA at 2.30pm on **Wednesday 11 September 2024.**

#### PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Andrew Prosser, Alaric Smith, Geoff Saul, Tim Sumner and Lidia Arciszewska.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance), Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Christine Elsasser (Democratic Services Officer), Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Officer), Elise Chowdhury (Communications Officer), Rachel Biles (Strategic Leisure Projects Lead), Susan McPherson (Senior Officer), Phil Measures (Service Lead), Simon Winfield (Economic Development Team Assistant), Sam Stronach (Economic Development Manager), Emma Phillips (Market Towns Officer), Claire Locke (Assistant Director, Property and Regeneration), Bill Oddy (Assistant Director, Commercial Development), Alison Borrett (Senior Performance Analyst), Mark Pritchard (Business Manager, Communications), and Daniel Jacecko (Operations and Transport Manager, Ubico).

Other Councillors in attendance: Paul Marsh, Dan Levy, Julian Cooper and David Melvin.

#### **216 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rizvana Poole.

#### **217 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, declared an interest during the consideration of Agenda Item 12 'Allocation of S106 Monies to Witney Town Council to Design, Build and Operate a New Third Generation (3G) Pitch at West Witney Sports Ground'.

#### **218 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 22 July 2024, be agreed by the Executive as a true and accurate record and signed by the Leader of the Council.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Monday 22 July 2024, as a true and accurate record.

#### **219 Receipt of Announcements**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, welcomed attendees to the meeting, and thanked members of the public for attending proceedings. The Leader gave the members of the public in attendance a brief overview of the way that the meeting would run.

The Leader advised that the meeting was the Council's first in a new series of "Executive on Tour", and highlighted meetings that took place in the previous meeting series around the West Oxfordshire District in Charlbury, Woodstock, Carterton, Eynsham and Burford, along

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with a previous 'on tour' meetings held in Chipping Norton in November 2022 and February 2024.

The Leader advised that at the conclusion of the meeting, a public engagement session would be held with the Council's Economic Development Team, which would focus on outdoor markets and general economic development within the local area of Chipping Norton. The Leader highlighted the importance of the public engagement session and encouraged members of the public in attendance to stay behind and participate.

The Leader advised that Chipping Norton Theatre had been awarded a 3-year grant of £75,000 during a funding agreement. The Leader stated that the funding was welcome news to the theatre, and allowed them to plan for the future with the peace of mind arising from the stability of the funding agreement as the theatre would not have to work in a revolving 12-month cycle.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development stated that 12 businesses within the West Oxfordshire district area had been awarded grants of up to £5,000 from the continuing UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to enhance their prominence and stature within the local area. Businesses that were awarded funding included Cotswold Grooming Company and Beehive Home & Lifestyle.

Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects, provided an update regarding progress of refurbishment and improvement works which had taken place at Chipping Norton Leisure Centre. These included works to repair the roof, flooring, lighting, tiling and general redecoration of the Leisure Centre where it was felt this was needed. The Executive Member stated this was a good news story for Chipping Norton.

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, advised that the Council had exchanged contracts with 'Green Access' in relation to the Walterbush Road affordable housing site of Chipping Norton. The Executive Member stated that the contract exchange would pave the way for works to get underway at the site and for the appropriate funding to be obtained ahead of the transfer of Section 106 Funding, and work was anticipated to be completed by August 2025.

The Executive Member also stated that in their role as Chair of the West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership, they had been given assurance by the local Probation Service surrounding the Government's Early Release Scheme for prisoners. The Executive Member added the reassurance they had given, contained plans for accommodation and wider resettlement arrangements for prisoners integrating back into the community.

The Leader concluded by stating that the next meeting of the Executive would take place on Wednesday 9 October 2024, at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber at the Council's Woodgreen Offices in Witney.

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### **Participation of the Public**

The Executive provided the following answers to the following questions:

**Q1** Asked by Alison Huitt, Resident – Chipping Norton:

What measures is WODC taking to check and follow up with any necessary action:

- (i) On who is authorised to have a wheelie bin or a 'Grundon' type bin in the upper and lower parts of Market Street;

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- (ii) On whether these bins are being used appropriately and emptied regularly to avoid the unpleasant smells, infestation of maggots, broken and lidless bins as currently the case;
- (iii) On the nearby Chequers in Spring Street leaving several used commercial cooking oil containers and an up-ended WODC wheelie bin on the footpath beside their premises?"

The Town Council raised enthusiastic support to help "Keep Chippy Beautiful" at their Annual Town Meeting some 16 months ago. Residents of Spring Street are doing their bit by weeding and tidying up Market Street and Spring Street. Action is needed from WODC to deal with the bins and other detritus".

**A1** Answered by Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment, in conjunction with Mr. Bill Oddy, Assistant Director for Commercial Development:

"I would like to thank Alison Huitt for bringing this to the attention of the Council.

A site visit to the area was arranged by Officers last week. This meeting took place in the Market Street and Middle Row with Alison Huitt and Councillor Keyser from Chipping Norton Town Council last Thursday, I wanted to look for myself at the extent of the problem.

The meeting was also attended by Councillor Geoff Saul, local Ward Councillor for Chipping Norton, and Mr Bill Oddy, the Assistant Director responsible for Waste and Environmental Services at West Oxfordshire District Council. I will now ask Mr Oddy to outline the Environmental Action Plan that had been agreed at the site meeting.

"A total of 13 actions had been agreed at the site meeting which fell into 3 broad categories.

1. Removing fly tipped items and street sweeping Market Street and Middle Row to improve the environment;
2. Replacing unsightly and damaged domestic and business waste bins to improve the visual impact they have on the street scene;
3. Asking Oxfordshire County Council to undertake repairs to the railings in the Market Square between Market Street and Middle Row.

The 13 actions have all been allocated to officers to complete, and the initial target dates for the work to be completed is 4 October 2024, when Alison Huitt and Councillor Keyser will be updated."

**Q2** Asked by Sandra Coleman, Mayor and Town Council Chair – Chipping Norton:

"Can you confirm the process followed by West Oxfordshire District Council when a resident misses a Council Tax payment, and if this helps residents who fall behind to pay in the future? Have the Council ever considered taking a more holistic approach to help residents recover from this situation?"

**A2** Answered by Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance:

Thank you. Yes. This question was given at short notice so I'm happy to take it as it's a good one.

I would like to thank the Mayor for their question. In order to make sure that we answer it properly, we will give a full written response in the next 7 days. But in the meantime, I would like to encourage any residents who do have problems and concerns with Council Tax, to contact the Council. We can help to come up with a course of action to resolve their

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difficulties. I think it's very important that we engage with residents with difficulties and seek to help them through that.

## **221 Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning, introduced and gave an overview of the recommendations made to the Executive by the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee, which had made two recommendations to the Executive regarding the Development Management Improvement Programme.

The Executive Member advised that the Committee considered a report it had requested as part of its work plan titled "Development Management Improvement Programme – Progress Update", on 4 September 2024.

The Executive agreed unanimously to the recommendations made by the O&S Committee.

A document containing the full recommendations and responses from the Executive is appended to the minutes of the meeting.

## **222 Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee**

No matters had been raised by the Audit and Governance Committee.

## **223 Proposed Reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the Planning System**

Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning, introduced the report, which considered a number of proposed changes to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and sought to agree West Oxfordshire District Council's response to those proposed changes.

In debate, the Executive agreed that the formal response must be of a robust nature, and that the response must be challenging to the Government.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Julian Cooper stated that the response would benefit from highlighting Rural Exception Sites, and that more exposure to these sites would adopt fresh thinking in relation to the subject matter.

Councillor Hugo Ashton proposed that the Executive agree the recommendations as listed on the original report. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the content of the report, including the summary overview of the proposed changes to national planning policy;
2. Delegate responsibility to the Planning Policy Manager, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning, to agree, finalise and submit the suggested draft consultation response.

## **224 Financial Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One**

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the report, which detailed the Council's financial performance for Quarter One 2024-2025.

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In debate, the Executive highlighted the progress that had been made in relation to financial performance by the Executive administration since taking office in 2022. The Executive highlighted that they had taken a more robust approach to public finances and the protection of the Council's assets.

Councillor Alaric Smith proposed that the Executive agree the recommendations as listed on the original report. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the Council's Financial Performance for Quarter One 2024-2025;
2. Recommend to Council that an additional £750,000 should be included in the revised Capital Budget for 2024/25, as set out in 2.25 in the report.

## **225 Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter One**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which provided details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2024-25 Quarter One (Q1).

In debate, the Executive highlighted the positive impact of the Council's published Biodiversity Toolkit and the positive wider impacts being felt surrounding nature recovery, which involved partnership working with Town and Parish Councils. The Executive also stated that they were pleased to announce that gym and leisure memberships with the Council's leisure partner GLL, at sites including Carterton, Witney and Chipping Norton, had also increased during the quarter, along with increased gym attendance figures overall throughout the quarter.

The Executive also highlighted the work of the Council's Development Management team, who had seen a rise in the levels of planning applications being granted permission which had come during a time where there had been uncertainty regarding levels of staff retention. The Executive also acknowledged the work of the Council's homelessness prevention and housing teams for their ongoing hard work supporting those in the district who needed their help the most, amidst a rise in housing applications during the quarter.

The Executive also praised the work of the Council's waste collection partner Ubico, who had contributed to a 25% reduction in the rate of missed waste collections in the district, with the current missed collection rate at just 86 in 100,000. At the invitation of the Leader, Daniel Jacecko, Operations and Transport Manager at Ubico, gave an overview of the continuing work that their service area had undertaken during the quarter and more broadly in recent years, and praised the work of the wider Ubico workforce for their ongoing efforts for the district. The Operations Manager thanked the Executive for their ongoing support to Ubico.

The Leader stated they were pleased to see and present a flurry of good news, in the light of ongoing general challenges, and that Council staff and Officers continued to go above and beyond in the call of duty. The Leader stated that the work of Officers was invaluable, with much of it taking place behind the scenes with little exposure. The Executive collectively thanked the continuing work of the wider Council, and asked that the recognition did not go unnoticed.

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

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The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the 2024/25 Q1 service performance report.

**226 Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway Policy**

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment, introduced the report, which considered and sought to approve a new policy in respect of the enforcement of Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway.

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska proposed that the Executive agree the recommendations as listed on the original report. This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Prosser, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the Storage of Non-Motor Vehicles and Structures on the Public Highway Policy.

**227 Allocation of S106 Monies to Witney Town Council to Design, Build and Operate a New Third Generation (3G) Pitch at West Witney Sports Ground**

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, declared an interest ahead of the consideration of the report, and stated they were a Member of Witney Town Council. The Deputy Leader advised that the interest was non-pecuniary, and that they would abstain when voting upon the recommendations.

Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects, introduced the report, which sought to obtain approval to release Section 106 funding to Witney Town Council for the design, build and operation of a new third generation (3G) pitch with sports lighting at West Witney Sports Ground.

At the invitation of the Executive Member, Rachel Biles (Strategic Leisure Lead) set out to the Executive the progress that had been made in relation to the subject matter, which had resulted in the report being able to be considered by the Executive. The Strategic Leisure Lead outlined the partnership working provisions that had taken place with Witney Town Council, The Football Association, The Football Foundation and Oxfordshire Football Association to help bring the plans forward for consideration.

The Executive highlighted that a future pitch strategy related to the town of Chipping Norton would come forward for consideration.

Councillor Tim Sumner proposed that the Executive agree the recommendations as listed on the original report. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith and was put to a vote. There were 7 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 1 abstention (Councillor Duncan Enright). The vote was carried.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve that West Witney Sports Ground is the preferred location for a new 3G pitch and approves S106 spend on the project to be transferred to Witney Town Council to design, build and operate the facility;
2. Delegate authority to Assistant Director of Communities in consultation with Section 151 Officer, Executive Members for Leisure and Major Projects and Executive Member for Finance, to finalise the legal agreement for terms of transfer.

**228 Carterton Leisure Centre Decarbonisation**

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery, introduced the report, which reviewed opportunities to apply for funding and deliver the decarbonisation of Carterton Leisure Centre.

Councillor Andrew Prosser proposed that the Executive agree the recommendations as listed on the original report. This was seconded by Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the review of costs contained within this report and proceed with the preparation of a business case for solar PV and battery storage at Carterton Leisure Centre;
2. Agree that an application for Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme or other grant funding should be made with the agreement of the Director of Finance, if grant terms are subsequently published which provide funding which would mean the Council would not have an ongoing revenue deficit.

**229 Witney & Chipping Norton Air Quality Action Plan**

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment, introduced the report, which sought to approve the Witney and Chipping Norton Air Quality Action Plan, prior to being published on West Oxfordshire District Council's website. The Executive Member paid tribute to the work of the Council's Senior Environmental Officer, Susan McPherson, for their work in bringing the Air Quality Action Plan forward for adoption.

In debate, the Executive highlighted that the plans showed significant improvement to current air quality levels in Witney and Chipping Norton, against levels detailed in the report from 2008, which had been accelerated by the increasing number of electric vehicles and reductions in speed limits across the county, in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council. It was also noted that the Covid-19 pandemic period had also played a significant factor in the improvement to air quality, as a result of less movement and traffic flow during the Covid lockdown periods in the 2-year pandemic.

The Executive also described plans to help the local air quality improve further by adopting a HGV Routing Policy, where Heavy Goods Vehicles would be re-routed around towns such as Chipping Norton, and neighbouring similar towns in the Cotswolds like Moreton-in-Marsh and Stow-on-the-Wold.

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska proposed that the Executive agree the recommendation as listed on the original report. This was seconded by Councillor Geoff Saul, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the Witney and Chipping Norton Air Quality Action Plan.

**230 Dry Mixed Recycling Bulking and Haulage Contract**

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment, introduced the report, which sought approval to enter into a contract with N+P Group for bulking, haulage and processing of recycling collected as part of the residential kerbside and business waste collections.

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The Executive Member praised the work of Bill Oddy (Assistant Director, Commercial Development), Simon Anthony (Business Manager, Environmental Services) and Bob Lightfoot (Waste Contract Manager), for their efforts and resolve in helping to bring forward the contract for consideration by the Executive.

In debate, the Executive highlighted that the contract was a huge step forward within the realm of waste collection provisions, and that an expansion of waste collection provisions at the kerbside would be cascaded through the Council's communication channels in due course.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Dan Levy queried whether in the midst of the new contract being agreed, kerbside collection modelling would remain the same across the district. The Executive stated that kerbside collections would not change as a result of the proposed contract agreement.

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska proposed that the Executive agree the recommendations as listed on the original report. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Agree to enter into a Dry Mixed Recycling Bulking and Haulage Contract with N+P for 2 years from 1 October 2024;
2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Commercial Development, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Director of Finance, to award a Glass Recycling Bulking and Haulage Contract with the preferred bidder for up to 2 years from 1 October 2024, following a procurement exercise.

**231 Exclusion of Press and Public**

The item was not considered at the meeting.

**232 Exempt Annex A: Dry Mixed Recycling Bulking and Haulage Contract**

The exempt annex was considered as part of the public consideration of the Dry Mixed Recycling Bulking and Haulage Contract agenda item.

The meeting closed at 3.53pm.

CHAIR