

EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday 9 September 2014

At 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Witney

Present

Councillor Mrs J C Baker (Chairman)

Councillors: A K Beames A D Harvey
 Mrs B J Churchill C Holliday
 R F N Curry J S King
 P J Dorward D A Snow

Officers: Town Clerk

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their absence were received from Councillors Ms C Curry, H B Eaglestone and B J Woodruff.

407 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

408 **WEST OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN**

Having had a presentation on 28 August 2014 by Mr C Hargraves from the District Council's Planning Policy team, the Councillors provided their comments in order to formulate an official response to the consultation questions, as follows:

Consultation Questions

Plan Period

1) Do you agree that the period 2011 - 2029 is a reasonable period of time for the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan to cover? If not, what period should the plan cover and why?

Witney Town Council agrees that the period 2011-2029 is a reasonable period of time for the new WOLP to cover.

Proposed Housing Target

2) Do you support the proposed Local Plan housing target of at least 9,450 homes to be provided in West Oxfordshire over the period 2011 - 2029 (525 per annum)?

Witney Town Council has no comment

If you do not agree with the proposed target, please explain why and identify which alternative target you consider should be used.

N/A

Proposed Spatial Strategy

3) Do you agree with proposed spatial strategy outlined in paragraphs 5.15 - 5.19?

Witney Town Council broadly agrees with the spatial strategy - that the major service Centre & towns should bear some development, however the Council considers that Carterton should bear more of the development as it feels that the Witney infrastructure is not sufficient to take 3550 houses.

Small villages should be offered the opportunity for growth, in order to support their local services such as the village shop, pub and post office – facilities unsustainable and under threat.

If not, which alternative strategy do you think should form the basis of the new Local Plan?

See above.

Witney Sub-Area

4) Do you support the overall level of housing provision identified for the Witney Sub-Area (3,550 new homes)? Please expand as necessary.

No – the infrastructure in Witney is not able to support the 3550 and Witney Town Council has no confidence that the infrastructure will follow with development. The infrastructure won't support more houses as the town does not have the infrastructure for the houses we have now – particularly primary and secondary school provision, health services such as GPs and Minor injuries, and leisure provision predominantly sports facilities.

Flooding – the amount of development along the lines of water course should be limited and planners/developers should look at where the floodplains are – and impact further development has on the town from a potential for flooding perspective.

Further significant development will change the nature of the town – from being that of a quaint Market town to being overpopulated, losing its heritage and identity. The landscape and its wildlife is being eroded.

Furthermore some of the Town Council's Members have reviewed the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan and are concerned that it contains no facts or figures.

5) Do you support the draft allocation of land at East Witney for the provision of 400 homes? Please expand as necessary.

Witney Town Council does not support the draft allocation of land at East Witney for the provision of 400 homes. Members ask what makes it ok to build houses in this area when plans to build the Cogges Link Road were rejected due to environmental reasons and flooding. It is in the flood zone.

This area is the wrong side of Bridge Street – without access to the Town Centre where will the residents do their shopping.

Given the current demand on schools and health services the Council is concerned that these residents will in fact have to access services to the west of the town, encouraging traffic through the Town Centre in order to reach these services.

6) Do you support the draft allocation of land at North Witney for the phased provision of 1,000 homes with the majority (c.800) to come forward after 2021? Please expand as necessary.

Witney Town Council would reiterate its comments from questions 4 & 5 regarding infrastructure.

It is also concerned the impact this development would have on Hailey Road, as it floods several times every year. It does not believe that this development would be sustainable and considers it to be an isolated development. A proper environmental study of this area should be undertaken given the underground springs known to be there.

If there is to be a planning application for Witney North – it must not be allowed to come forward piecemeal – it must be come forward as one development with major infrastructure as a planning condition. It will be one development – WODC must consider it as just that.

The Council also considers the West End link will not solve traffic problems in Witney.

7) Do you agree with the exclusion of the alternative site options to the south and north east of Witney? Please expand as necessary.

Yes for the reasons given to the previous questions – lack of supporting infrastructure etc.

Witney Town Council is concerned that the character of the town is changing and any further large scale developments would change the nature of the town. North Curbridge/West Witney should be the last large scale development permitted.

However development to the South of the Town Centre is preferred as access is the right side of the river and the bottle neck at Bridge Street, and easy access to the A40. But this should be for Ducklington Parish to determine as

8) Are there any other sites not identified that you think should be identified within the Witney sub-area to help meet the overall housing requirement?

Witney Town Council supports those smaller development areas detailed on page 30 of the WOLP. However development of green spaces should be resisted in the most strongest terms in order to protect the character of the town, its landscape and wildlife.

Carterton Sub-Area

9) Do you support the overall level of housing provision identified for the Carterton Sub-Area (2,450 new homes)? Please expand as necessary.

Witney Town Council supports this overall level, however Carterton has opportunities for growth and consequently the Council considers it could take more new homes.

Although this could have an adverse effect and impact on Witney but with the correct infrastructure such as the dualling of A40 to Oxford this could also benefit the two towns.

10) Do you support the proposed draft allocation of land at East Carterton for the provision of 700 homes? Please expand as necessary.

No opinion – for CTC to determine

11) Do you support the proposed draft allocation of land at REEMA Central for the provision of 200 homes (net)? Please expand as necessary.

No opinion – for CTC to determine

12) Do you agree with the exclusion of the alternative site options to the north of Carterton at Kilkenny Farm and to the west of Carterton? Please expand as necessary.

No opinion – for CTC to determine

13) Are there any other sites not identified that you think should be identified within the Carterton sub-area to help meet the overall housing requirement?

No opinion – for CTC to determine

Chipping Norton Sub-Area

14) Do you support the overall level of housing provision identified for the Chipping Norton Sub-Area (1,450 new homes)? Please expand as necessary.

Witney Town Council supports the level of new homes but considers Chipping Norton could take more development as an opportunity for growth, particularly as it won't affect the A40.

15) Do you support the proposed draft allocation of land at East Chipping Norton for the provision of around 500 homes? Please expand as necessary.

No opinion – for CTC to determine

16) Are there any other sites not identified that you think should be identified within the Chipping Norton sub-area to help meet the overall housing requirement?

No opinion – for CTC to determine

Eynsham - Woodstock Sub-Area

17) Do you support the overall level of housing provision identified for the Eynsham - Woodstock Sub-Area (1,350 new homes)? Please expand as necessary.

Witney Town Council supports the level of new homes but considers Eynsham/Woodstock could take more development as an opportunity for growth. This could support the dual carrying of A40. These both have access to the railway at Long Hanborough.

18) Are there any other sites not identified that you think should be identified within the Eynsham - Woodstock sub-area to help meet the overall housing requirement?

No opinion

Burford - Charlbury Sub-Area

19) Do you support the overall level of housing provision identified for the Burford - Charlbury sub-area (650 new homes)? Please expand as necessary.

Witney Town Council supports the level but considers it could be higher – as an opportunity for growth. Bradwell Grove Village is a good example of new build – planners should think of this as a blue print for future developments in smaller settlements.

20) Are there any other sites not identified that you think should be identified within the Burford - Charlbury sub-area to help meet the overall housing requirement?

No opinion

Business Land Provision

21) Do you agree with the overall level of business land provision identified in the emerging Local Plan (60 hectares)?

Witney Town Council is concerned that business will not want to come to Witney because of the road and traffic problems – it simply does not have the road networks to support businesses coming to the town.

The A40 needs to be dualled from Oxford to Cheltenham. Other roads the A40 serves, such as the A34 also need addressing – the wider major road infrastructure of Oxfordshire needs reviewing.

22) Do you agree that there is a need to provide additional business land in Carterton to attract inward investment?

Witney Town Council agrees that there is a need to provide additional business land in Carterton for the life of the plan.

23) Do you support the potential option of using the District Council's playing pitches at Monahan Way for business use, subject to their replacement in a suitable location elsewhere? If so, where should the replacement pitches be provided?

N/A

24) Are there any other sites in or around Carterton that would be suitable for business use?

Affordable Housing

25) Do you agree that all schemes resulting in a net gain of one or more dwellings (except self-build) should be required to make provision for affordable housing either on-site or through a commuted sum payment?

Witney Town Council agrees. Particularly the provision for affordable housing for the elderly (bungalows) to free up family homes

26) Do you agree that self-build housing schemes should be exempt from having to make provision for affordable housing (subject to self-certification)?

Witney Town Council considers that self-build should be part of affordable housing. This will enable people to get on the property ladder.

27) Do you consider that the threshold for on-site provision of affordable housing should be set at 6 dwellings, 11 dwellings or at a different level altogether?

Witney Town Council considers the threshold should be set at 6 dwellings

28) Do you agree with the proposals to seek up to 50% in the higher value area, up to 40% in the medium value area and up to 35% in the lower value area (as defined on Figure 8.2)?

Witney Town Council agrees with the proposals.

29) Do you agree that in terms of tenure, the Council should generally seek two thirds affordable rented housing and one third intermediate?

Witney Town Council agrees.

30) Do you agree that the affordable housing commuted sum should be calculated on a £per m² basis to be worked up alongside the Council's CIL draft charging schedule?

Witney Town Council agrees.

Housing Mix - Market Housing

31) The most recent evidence set out in the Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) suggests that as a general guide, the Council should seek the following proportions of market housing:

- ▶ 4.8% 1-bed
- ▶ 27.9% 2-bed
- ▶ 43.4% 3-bed
- ▶ 23.9% 4-bed

Do you agree that this is an appropriate approach in West Oxfordshire?

Witney Town Council considers that there should be a larger proportion of 1-2 bed houses – but with provision for the houses to be extended into the loft with expanding families. The provision of 4 bed properties should be lower and 1 bed higher.

Housing Mix - Affordable Housing

32) The most recent evidence suggests that as a general guide, the Council should seek the following proportions of affordable housing:

- 65% - 67% 1-bed and 2-bed
- 33% - 35% 3-bed and 4-bed

Do you agree that this is an appropriate approach in West Oxfordshire?

Witney Town Council agrees with the affordable housing proportions.

Housing Provision for Older People

33) Do you agree with the measures outlined above and consider they will help to meet the future housing needs of West Oxfordshire's ageing population?

Witney Town Council would urge WODC to be mindful of the changing demographics and the massive growth area for the aging population. The measures outlined above will help to a degree.

Are there any other specific measures that should be introduced to help meet the future housing needs of older people in West Oxfordshire?

West Oxfordshire needs more flats, bungalows, sheltered accommodation schemes and Housing villages.

Housing Provision for Younger People

34) In addition to securing a good and balanced mix of house types and tenures, providing more affordable housing and encouraging self-build, are there any other specific measures that the Council should be pursuing through the Local Plan to help meet the future housing needs of younger people in West Oxfordshire?

Should apply to all

Housing Provision for People with Disabilities

35) Do you agree with the measures outlined above and consider they will help to meet the future housing needs of people with disabilities in West Oxfordshire?

Witney Town Council does not consider there are sufficient packages of care when someone comes of age to set up home.

Are there any other specific measures that should be introduced to help meet the future housing needs of those with a disability?

The Town Council asks that the plan is creative in ways to provide housing provision for people with disabilities – as an example there is a unit in Moorland Rd which accommodates 3 disabled people – they have adapted themselves to live independently.

Witney Town Council fees strongly that the WOLP should cater for everyone's needs in the district.

Developers should be encouraged to build more life homes, which can be adapted with age - meeting the needs of the houseowner. It should be easier through the planning process for residences to be made disabled friendly.

Housing Provision for Black and Minority Ethnic Households

36) Other than in relation to the overall objective of securing a good, balanced mix of house types and tenures, are there any specific measures the Council should be seeking to introduce through the Local Plan to address the needs of black and minority ethnic households in West Oxfordshire?

Witney Town Council considers the plan should encompass all those living in West Oxfordshire regardless of their ethnicity – there should be no discrimination.

Housing Provision for Households with Children

37) Other than in relation to the overall objective of securing a good, balanced mix of house types and tenures including market and affordable housing, are there any specific measures the Council should be seeking to introduce through the Local Plan to address the needs of households with children?

Witney Town Council would comment that the town and parish councils should be given more funds to provide play areas & amenity space – such as football pitches, and sporting facilities. Ensuring there is supporting social infrastructure for the communities. The Windrush Leisure Centre is not sufficient in size to support the Witney and surrounding areas.

The Plan should ensure schooling provision is a high priority

Houses should have sufficient outdoor garden space for children to play and enjoy.

Self-Build

38) Do you agree with the measures proposed and consider they will help to meet the future housing needs of those wishing to undertake self-build projects in West Oxfordshire?

Witney Town Council considers the measures do not go far enough to encourage self build. The WOLP could go a bit further and designate a site as a self-build area.

Are there any other specific measures that should be introduced to help meet the future housing needs of those wishing to self-build?

Travelling Communities

39) Other than the application of a criteria-based policy to deal with speculative planning applications and specific site allocations for travelling communities to be identified in the Local Plan (Part 2) document are there any other specific measures that the Council should be seeking to introduce to meet the future housing needs of travelling communities?

Witney Town Council has no comment to make.

409 **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

a) The Town Clerk gave a verbal report from the Amenities Committee held on 8 September 2014 relating to the Christmas Lights event.

b) It was **RESOLVED** that the Amenities Committee be granted delegated authority to secure the event for the Christmas Festivities 2014

The meeting closed at 7.42pm.

Chairman.