

EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 14 December 2016

At 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor C Holliday (Chairman)

Councillors:	S E Bartington	P J Dorward
	A K Beames	J M Doughty
	C Brown	H B Eaglestone
	H W Chirgwin	J S King
	B J Churchill	T J Morris
		L M Price
		C K Woodward
Officers:	Town Clerk	Democratic Services Officer
	Responsible Financial Officer	

Also Present: Mr Harry St. John (District Councillor for North Leigh)

706 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Churchill, Enright, Harvey, Reynolds and Temple.

707 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

708 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The meeting was adjourned in line with standing order 42 so that Mr Harry St. John could address the Council on the West Oxfordshire Local Plan in his capacity as District Councillor for North Leigh.

709 **TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD EARLIER IN THE EVENING**

The Council received a verbal report of the meeting of the Special Policy and Resources Committee held earlier in the evening. The Leader of the Council proposed the budget as presented to Council. This resulted in a 3.36% increase to the precept.

RESOLVED: that the verbal report of the Special Policy and Resources Committee be noted and any recommendations therein be approved.

710 **TO DECLARE THE PRECEPT FOT 2017/18**

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be authorised to sign and serve a precept on the West Oxfordshire District Council, in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), requiring the District Council to pay the Town Council the sum of £1,340,063 in respect of Council Tax for the town during the financial year 2017/18.

711 **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL EYNHAM PARK AND RIDE AND A40 BUS LANE CONSULTATION**

The Council received and considered a consultation from Oxfordshire County Council on a park and ride at Eynsham and the proposal for a bus lane on the A40.

There followed a discussion with members agreeing that although the concept was fine in principal, people would not drive to Eynsham from Witney to park the car to get a bus to Oxford. It was felt that money would be better spent exploring other options such as train or tram.

A member reported that he had spoken to Eynsham Parish Councillors and they were in favour of more dual carriageway and also a route to allow the S1 bus to go via Botley. He agreed with this and thought it would keep traffic moving. He reported that neighbouring parishes were supporting the concept of a train line. Another member commented that a tram system would be far less expensive.

Cllr Bartington entered at 7.17pm.

A member who was also a County Councillor expressed disappointment that the bus lane would only be in one direction. She would also like to see more dualling of the road and future planning for a train or tram system. However, she understood that there was a limited pot of money with a limited time frame for it to be spent. She added that the County Council would be consulting on workplace parking levies for the city and a congestion charge. She thought these would be fantastic and companies would have to discourage car parking.

Another member described the proposal as a sticking plaster. She was concerned that this might stop future funding.

A member stated that having listened to all the comments, he was concerned about supporting a fundamentally bad idea and proposed asking the County Council to come up with a solution that worked. He personally favoured a tram system.

Another member pointed out that the money for the scheme was ring fenced.

A member added that she had been to the pre-consultation briefing and in her opinion the scheme was not future proof. A lot of the proposed housing developments had not been included when planning the scheme. She too was concerned that any plans now did not impede future improvements.

Members felt that the money was being spent incorrectly and the scheme lacked vision. The member who was also a County Councillor emphasised that the limited money was allocated for a solution to ease congestion and it was time limited.

A member felt that if the scheme went ahead the access for Witney East needed to be protected.

Another member pointed out that a lot of traffic went beyond Oxford so the scheme would not help.

It was proposed that instead of completing the on line response, a letter should be written to the County Council expressing the Town Council's views. This was seconded and all members were in favour.

RESOLVED: that a letter be written to the County Council expressing the Town Council's views.

712 **WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE SUBMISSION DRAFT WEST OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2013**

The Council received and considered the proposed modifications to the submission Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2013.

The Leader explained that this had gone through the District Council Cabinet. He emphasised that it was important for WODC to get the local plan in place as currently there were no guidelines and there was not a 5 year land supply. Housing developments were being permitted because there was no Local Plan. As a District Councillor he had supported the Local Plan and modifications going out to consultation. All comments made would be going to the Inspector, not to the District Council.

The Leader added that as a Town Councillor he agreed with District Cllr St. John who had addressed the meeting earlier that evening in connection with North Leigh which had already had a significant development granted. Cllr St. John had concerns on infrastructure in terms of traffic that was not yet in place. The Leader also had concerns about flooding. However, he did understand that the Local Plan should be in place to prevent unregulated development.

Another member who was also a District Councillor commented that she had voted against the Local Plan as she had listened to residents who were not happy. Surrounding villages such as North Leigh and Freeland would be very much affected.

A member commented that he agreed with concerns about flooding and traffic/infrastructure. He wanted to raise the issue of insufficient healthcare provision. He also had concerns about infrastructure – namely water, electric and gas. The infrastructure was not there to support the additional housing.

A member agreed with other comments that a plan must be put in place. The situation of not having a plan was worse than having the plan with the proposed modifications. Without a plan development would be a "free for all" and there would be no S106 money. However, he thought that there was not enough school provision – North Curbridge and North Witney would need new primary schools and a new secondary school would be required for the town. He also agreed that the provision of doctors should be looked at.

Another member was interested to know why Witney had such a high allocation of development when Carterton wanted more. She also had concerns about the infrastructure but felt that a Neighbourhood Plan would help this.

The Leader stated that he had made his thoughts clear. The development of North Witney was something that the Inspector had asked for. If a Local Plan was not in place by March 2017 the government would impose one. As he had approved the modifications to go out, he felt that it was not appropriate to lead the response. He suggested that the Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee should lead the response instead. All members were in favour.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council supports the proposed modifications to the submission Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 but would like to see further inclusion of infrastructure.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

Chairman.