

Bicester Town Council



BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

Bicester Town Council Meeting

Ref: BTC05/2324

Monday 20th November 2023

at 19:00hrs

**The Council Chamber, Bicester Town Council, The
Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS**

Members:

Cllr Harry Knight – **Chairman**, Cllr Damien Maguire – **Vice-Chairman**
Cllr Tom Beckett, Cllr Nick Cotter, Cllr Donna Ford, Cllr Dan Hallett,
Cllr Sam Holland, Cllr Rachel Mallows, Cllr Nicholas Mawer, Cllr Rich Oliver,
Cllr Christopher Pruden, Cllr Alisa Russell, Cllr Les Sibley, Cllr Jim Webb,
Cllr Paul Wheatley

Other Circulation:

Cllr John Broad, Cllr Sandy Dalimore, Cllr Simon Lytton, Cllr Callum Miller,
Cllr Lynn Pratt, Cllr Dan Sames and Cllr Michael Waine



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14 November 2023

To all Members of the Bicester Town Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Bicester Town Council** at **The Council Chamber, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS** on **Monday 20th November 2023** to commence at **19:00hrs** for the transaction of the following business.

Phil Evans
Town Clerk

Agenda

All Council Meetings are open to the public and press, unless otherwise stated.

1. Apologies for Absence

To consider apologies and reasons for absence. Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify Bicester Town Council (enquiries@bicester.gov.uk) prior to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors are reminded to declare any interests on any item on this Agenda in accordance with Bicester Town Council's Code of Conduct.

3. Public Session

In accordance with Standing Orders 1 d-f, members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.

Time allocated shall not exceed 10 minutes. No member shall speak for more than 2 minutes.

4. **Minutes of the Town Council Meeting** (Pages 5 - 9)
To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following **Town Council meetings**:

BTC04/2324 – 21st August 2023
BTC04A/2324 – SPECIAL – 25th September 2023
5. **Minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting** (Pages 10 - 13)
To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following **Environment Committee meeting**:

ENV02/2324 – 18th July 2023
6. **Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting** (Pages 14 - 15)
To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following **Finance Committee meeting**:

FIN02/2324 - 8th August 2023
7. **Minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings** (Pages 16 - 25)
To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following **Planning Committee meetings**:

PL03/2324 – 4th July 2023
PL04/2324 – 8th August 2023
8. **Minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting** (Pages 26 - 29)
To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following **Policy Committee meeting**:

POL02/2324 – 14th August 2023
9. **Questions on Working Parties and Other Groups** (Pages 30 - 35)
To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following:
 - **BTAG02/2324 – 27th July 2023**
 - **EWP03/2324 – 13th September 2023**
 - **PER02/2324 – 12th July 2023**
10. **Report from Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Councillors**
A report may be delivered to Bicester Town Council from Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councillors.
11. **Mayors Report** (Page 36)
Councillors are asked to **NOTE** the attached Mayor's Report.
12. **Bicester Food Bank**
A presentation will be given by the Bicester Food Bank.

- 13. Proposed Changes to Bicester Wards** (Pages 37 - 40)
Councillors are asked to **REVIEW** and **DISCUSS** the above.
- 14. The Bicester School** (Page 41)
Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** this request.
- 15. Conclusion of Audit 2022/23 Accounts** (Pages 42 - 46)
To receive the report of the external auditor following the limited assurance review of the 2022/23 accounts completed on 10 September 2023 and to note and approve the actions taken and required in response to the report.
- 16. Independence and Competence of the Internal Auditor** (Pages 47 - 56)
To **CONSIDER** the recommendations of the Finance Committee. At its meeting held on 10 October 2023 the Finance Committee resolved to make the following recommendations to Full Council, that:
- Annually, the agenda for the first meeting of Council following Mayor Making includes the appointment of the Internal Auditor as a standing item;
 - In advance of each of the above meetings the Finance Committee considers the independence and competence of the putative internal auditor;
 - The ongoing appointment of Mulberry & Co as the Council's internal auditor for the financial year 2023/24 be confirmed; and
 - Mulberry & Co also be appointed for the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26 in order to take advantage of a three-year fixed fee offer.
- 17. Date of Next Meeting**
Monday 15th January 2024 – 7pm, The Chamber Room, Garth House
- Close of meeting:**

Minutes of the Bicester Town Council

A meeting of the **Bicester Town Council** was held on **Monday 21st August 2023** at **19:00 hrs** at the **The Council Chamber, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS**.

Present:

Cllr Harry Knight (Chairman)
Cllr Damien Maguire (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Tom Beckett
Cllr Nick Cotter
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Nicholas Mawer
Cllr Christopher Pruden
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Jim Webb
Cllr Paul Wheatley

In Attendance:

Phil Evans, Town Clerk
Julie Trinder, Administration Officer – Civic and Democratic
Lieutenant Colonel Ged Hennigan RLC, HQ Bicester Garrison
GSM (WO1) Graham Patterson, HQ Bicester Garrison
Mark Chivers, Resident

59/ Apologies for Absence

2324 RESOLVED that apologies of absence were received from Cllr Donna Ford, Cllr Sam Holland, Cllr Rachel Mallows and Cllr Rich Oliver.

60/ Declarations of Interest

2324 RESOLVED that no declarations of interest were received.

61/ Public Session

2324 RESOLVED that from HQ Bicester Garrison, Lieutenant Colonel Ged Hennigan RLC, Garrison Commander and GSM (WO1) Graham Patterson along with a member of the public, Mr Mark Chivers, were in attendance.

62/ Remembrance Day Service and Parade 2023

2324 From HQ Bicester Garrison, Lieutenant Colonel Ged Hennigan RLC, Garrison Commander and GSM Graham Patterson presented their proposal to a change in format of the Remembrance Day Service and Parade to take place on Sunday 12th November 2023.

RESOLVED that Councillors **NOTED** and **COMMENTED** on the proposal.

63/ Minutes of the Town Council Meeting

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:

BTC03/12143 – 19th June 2023

64/ Minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors request these minutes be deferred to the next meeting due to the incorrect minutes published in this agenda pack.

65/ Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:

FIN01/2324 – 6th June 2023

Councillors requested that minutes of the meeting **FIN01/2324 – 1st August 2023** be deferred and presented to the next Finance meeting for approval before coming to Full Council meeting.

66/ Minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:

PL02/2324 – 13th June 2023

PL03/2324 – 4th July 2023

67/ Minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:

POL01/2324 – 12th June 2023

68/ Questions on Working Parties and Other Groups

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:

BTAG01/2324 – 22nd June 2023

EWP01/2324 – 7th June 2023

EWP02/2324 – 5th July 2023

PER01/2324 – 21st June 2023

69/ Reports from Oxfordshire County and Cherwell District Councillors

2324 RESOLVED that Cllr Sibley:

- Gave his recognition to the excellent exam results achieved at the Bicester Schools and congratulated pupils, teacher and parents for all their hard work enabling the pupils to achieve this.
- Informed the Councillors that the 20mph speed limit is out for consultation.

RESOLVED that Councillor Beckett and Councillor Mawer reported that the Consultation for the Local Plan is now being undertaken.

70/ Mayors Report

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **NOTED** the Mayors Report.

71/ Mayoral Chain

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that Officers cost up and seek the best value for money with Appendix 1.

72/ A4095 Realignment

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors request this item be deferred until further information is made available.

73/ Councillor Seat Allocation

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **NOTED** and **AGREED** the changes to Councillors roles as detailed below:

Environment Committee

Standing Down: Cllr Dan Hallett
Replacement Cllr: Cllr Jim Webb

Standing Orders Tasking Group

Standing Down: Cllr Hallett
Replacement Cllr: Cllr Les Sibley

Events Working Group

Standing Down: Cllr Les Sibley & Cllr Jamie Jessett
Replacement Councillor: Cllr Jim Webb & Cllr Christopher Pruden

74/ Exclusion of Press and Public

2324

RECOMMENDED

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

75/ OYAP

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **AGREED** that the Service Level Agreement remains to be honoured, however, 2 Councillors abstained when asked to vote.

76/ Date of Next Meeting

2324 Monday 20th November 2023 – 7pm, The Chamber Room

Close of meeting: 8.24pm

Minutes of the Bicester Town Council

A meeting of the **Bicester Town Council** was held on **Monday 25th September 2023** at **19:00 hrs** at the **The Council Chamber, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS**.

Present:

Cllr Harry Knight (Chairman)
Cllr Damien Maguire (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Tom Beckett
Cllr Nick Cotter
Cllr Donna Ford
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Rachel Mallows
Cllr Nicholas Mawer
Cllr Christopher Pruden
Cllr Jim Webb
Cllr Paul Wheatley

In Attendance:

Phil Evans – Town Clerk
Julie Trinder – Administration Officer (Civic & Democratic)

16/ Apologies for Absence

2324 RESOLVED that apologies of absence were received from Cllr Sam Holland, Cllr Rich Oliver, Cllr Les Sibley and Cllr Michael Waive.

17/ Declarations of Interest

2324 RESOLVED that no declarations of interest were received.

18/ Public Session

2324 RESOLVED that a member of the public, Mr Phillip Robbins, attended the meeting but made no representations to the Council.

19/ Minutes of the Town Council Meeting

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:

BTC04/2324 – 21st August 2023

20/ Councillor Appointment

2324 RESOLVED that Council **APPROVED** the appointments as set in item 2 of the Committee Change Notification report.

21/ Bank Mandates

2324 RESOLVED that the Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer are inevitably required to be authorised as signatories on all bank mandates and that Cllr Paul Wheatley **PROPOSED** that Cllr Jim Webb, Cllr Harry Knight and Chairman of Finance are also made authorised signatories on all bank mandates.

22/ Exclusion of Press and Public

2324 RESOLVED that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by the reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

23/ Savoir Fare

2324 RESOLVED that Council **RECOMMENDED** the sale of Savoir Fare to continue and to report back at a later meeting regarding options for Whitelands.

24/ Councillor & Staff Safety

2324 RESOLVED that Council **APPROVED** for urgent immediate legal advice to be sought in favour of the Town Clerk.

This decision was unanimously voted by Council.

25/ Date of Next Meeting

2324 Monday 20th November 2023 – 7pm, The Chamber Room, Garth House

Close of meeting: 8.11pm

Minutes of the Environment Committee

A meeting of the **Environment Committee** was held on **Tuesday 18th July 2023** at **19:00 hrs** at **The Chamber Room, The Garth, Launton Road, OX26 2PS**.

Present:

Cllr Donna Ford
Cllr Dan Hallett (Substitute)
Cllr Rachel Mallows
Cllr Nicholas Mawer
Cllr Rich Oliver
Cllr Christopher Pruden
Cllr Jim Webb (Substitute)

In Attendance:

Paul Canning, Service Manager
Jodi Clarke, Office Administrator

Public:

Ryan Onody
Ann Smith
Brian Welters

1/23 Apologies for Absence

24 RESOLVED that apologies were received from Cllr Maguire, Cllr Knight and Cllr Sibley.

Cllr Hallett Substituted for Cllr Knight.
Cllr Webb substituted for Cllr Sibley.

2/23 Appointment of Vice Chair

24 Due to Cllr Maguire sending their apologies the Environment Committee **APPROVED** Cllr Pruden to Chair the meeting in the absence of Cllr Maguire.

RESOLVED that Cllr Pruden was **APPOINTED** as Vice-Chair for the Environment Committee.

3/23 Declarations of Interest

24 RESOLVED that Cllr Webb declared that they have a possible declaration of interest on item 13 of the Agenda, Cllr Webb is a member of the Bicester Fossils Walking Football Club at Whitelands Farm Sports Grounds.

4/23 Minutes of the Environment Committee

24 RESOLVED that the Environment Committee **APPROVED** the minutes from the Environment Meeting held on:

- **30th May 2023 at 7:00pm – ENV01/2324**

5/23 Minutes of the Events Working Party

24 RESOLVED that the minutes for the events working party were not attached to the agenda and would be put forward to the next Environment Committee held on:

- **12th September 2023 at 7:00pm.**

6/23 Public Session

24 RESOLVED that several members of the public were present.

- Representative from the Biodiversity Community
- Resident from Glory Farm
- Parent from Southwold

7/23 Kompan Presentation (Southwold, Garth Park)

24 RESOLVED that a presentation was given by Tom & Ben from Kompan. The presentation included designs for Garth Park and the Southwold play area.

8/23 Presentation by Open Walls Network (Graffiti Wall)

24 19:45 – Cllr Mallows left the room.

RESOLVED that Open Walls Network did not attend the meeting. The Officer will approach them again and look for alternative companies.

19:49 – Cllr Mallows returned to the room.

9/23 Best Kept Allotment Award

24 RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** the Best Kept Allotment Trophies along with the annual purchase of trophies from the **EMR Green Infrastructure**.

RESOLVED that Office Administrator would send the pricing to the members of the meeting.

10/2 Allotment Deposit Increase

324 RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** the Allotment Deposit Increase to go to the Finance Committee on:

- **10th October 2023 at 7:00pm**

11/2 Flagpoles

324 RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** the following:

- **Supplier A** due to the quality and robustness of the materials provided by a local supplier.
- The installation of a 4th Flagpole.
- The funding for this project to be taken out of the **EMR BTC Premises**.

12/2 Manston Park Goal Posts

324 RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** the installation of the goal posts in line with the public consultation results and the funding to be taken from the **EMR Play**

Areas/Open space Investment.

RESOLVED the Officer will look into the placement of the goals or try to move the gate into the park.

13/2 Whitelands 9 v 9 Goals

324 RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** Supplier A as long as the Officer investigates which EMR funding is appropriate for this, it can then be presented to the Finance Committee on:

- **10th October 2023 at 7:00pm**

14/2 Bicester Fields Renaming

324 Cllr Ford proposed a new recommendation to change the name Bicester Fields to Langford Fields as opposed to Langford Park, Cllr Mallows seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** the renaming of Bicester Fields to Langford Fields.

15/2 Grant Funding

324 RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED** the content in Appendix 1.

Cllr Mawer mentioned that training was taking place on Lucerne Avenue.

16/2 ROSPA Findings

324 RESOLVED that the committee **APPROVED** the following:

- The refurbishment plan in 2.1 and 2.2, covering 2024 and 2025.
- The conversion of Siskin Close, Mallards Way (Duck Pond) and Burdock Close to another use – pending public consultation.

RESOLVED that the Officer was asked to look into the following:

- Refurbishment dates.

17/2 Approved Projects

324 RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED** the work schedule for approved projects.

RESOLVED that the Officer was asked to remove the work in progress (WIP) from projects that haven't been started.

Officer gave a verbal update on the meeting held with the woodland trust regarding the tree planting in Bure, 600 trees' are to be planted in the Bure Park Nature Reserve.

RESOLVED that the Officer would send the map to Cllr Mawer and look into the Grounds Maintenance contract prior to the trees being planted.

18/2 Electrical Rewire Garth Park

324 RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** the additional spend with funds to be taken from **EMR BTC Premises**.

19/2 Forward Plan
324 RESOLVED that the Committee **REVIEWED** and **COMMENTED** on the Forward Plan.

Resolved that the Officer was asked to put the following items onto the Forward Plan:

- Gravenhill bus shelter.
- Ground Maintenance Contract
- Ward by Ward Play Areas.

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 19:00

CLOSE OF MEETING: 20:35 hrs

Minutes of the Finance Committee

An extraordinary meeting of the **Finance Committee** was held on **Tuesday 8th August 2023** at **20:08 hrs** at the **Council Chamber, Garth House, Launton Rd, OX26 6PS**.

Present:

Cllr Paul Wheatley (Chairman)
Cllr Donna Ford
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Sam Holland
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Christopher Pruden
Cllr Les Sibley

In Attendance:

Cllr Damien Maguire (for Cllr Tom Beckett)
Cllr Nicholas Mawer
Cllr Jim Webb
Louise Steele – Locum RFO
Dominic Hilton – Administration Officer

41/2324 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies be received from Cllr Tom Beckett and Cllr Rachel Mallows.

42/2324 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED that no declarations were received.

43/2324 Public Session

RESOLVED that the Committee received no representations.

44/2324 Minutes of the Finance Committee

RESOLVED to confirm the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting **FIN01/2324** held on Tuesday 6th June 2023 were **NOTED** and **APPROVED**

45/2324 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items set out below on the grounds that publicly would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

46/2324 Bank Mandates for all Council Accounts

The Committee considered a tabled report by the Locum RFO about the signatories and mandates for the Lloyds, Santander and CCLA accounts

RESOLVED that Committee recommends to Full Council that new mandates be agreed for the Lloyds, Santander and CCLA accounts. That, if possible, the mandates should specify that all payments should be authorised by two signatories, one from Group A and one from Group B (if the split into groups is not administratively possible on the bank's

part it should still be implemented internally). Group A to comprise the Town Clerk; the Responsible Finance Officer and the Service Manager; Group B to comprise Councillors to be nominated by Full Council.

47/2324 Date of Next Meeting

- Tuesday 10th October 2023 – 7pm, The Chamber Room, Garth House.

Close of meeting: 20:33 hrs

Minutes of the Planning Committee

A meeting of the **Planning Committee** was held on **Tuesday 8th August 2023** at **19:00 hrs** at the **The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS.**

Present:

Cllr Donna Ford
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Sam Holland
Cllr Damien Maguire
Cllr Nicholas Mawer
Cllr Christopher Pruden
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Jim Webb
Cllr Paul Wheatley

In Attendance:

Dominic Hilton
Paul Canning

48/2 Apologies for Absence

324 RESOLVED that apologies were received from Cllr Nick Cotter, Cllr Rachel Mallows and Cllr Rich Oliver.

49/2 Declarations of Interest

324 RESOLVED that declarations of interest were received from Cllr Damien Maguire due to being a resident of Graven Hill and being a member of the Graven Hill Residents Society

50/2 Councillors are reminded to declare any interests on any item on this agenda in accordance with Bicester Town Council's Code of Conduct.

51/2 Declarations of Interest for District & County Councillors

324 RESOLVED that declarations of interest were received Cllr Tom Beckett, Cllr Donna Ford, Cllr Christopher Pruden and Cllr Les Sibley as District Councillors and Cllr Donna Ford and Cllr Les Sibley as Oxfordshire County Councillor on the Planning Committee will make their comments and decisions based upon information available at the time of the meeting. It is accepted that District and County Councillors may come to different decisions in the light of more information being made available at District or County Planning meetings.

52/2 Minutes of the Planning Meeting

324 RESOLVED that **MINUTES** of the following planning committee were **APPROVED**:

PL03/2324 – Tuesday 4th July 2023

53/2 Public Session

324 RESOLVED that Cllr Nick Mawer Entered the meeting at 19:04

54/2 Updates on large developments and associated issues**324****55/2 North West Bicester****324****56/2 Graven Hill****324****57/2 Other Business Strategic Sites****324**

It was requested that the Chairman of Planning Committee write to Oxfordshire County Council regarding their concerns with the A4095 / B4100 Banbury Road roundabout improvements.

58/2 Planning applications from Cherwell District Council**324**

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council commented on the following planning applications:

R3.0094/21 – Banbury Road Roundabout

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council strongly objects this planning application due to:

- Howes Lane Redevelopment needs to happen first
- Not Wanted by anyone in Bicester

23/01058/F – 7 Walpole Close

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning application.

23/01249/F – 84 Westacott Road

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01658/F Axis J9 Phase 1

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01711/REM Land North of Bicester Avenue

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01720/ADV – 25 Sheep Street

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01722/F – Bicester Park

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection and welcome this planning applications.

23/01731/F – Shell Chase

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council concerns regarding this planning application due to:

- Possible London Road Closure

- Land maybe required for London Road Redevelopment
- Negative impact on the environment and local allotment that this site backs onto.

23/01737/F – 29 Banbury Road

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council concerns regarding this planning application due to:

- **Large Development – affecting the street scene**
- **Negative impact on neighbours**
- **Overdevelopment of the site**

23/01747/F – 76 Longfields

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01756/F – 46 Isis Avenue

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01761/F – 88 Sheep Street

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01762/LB – 88 Sheep Street

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01771/F – Fortescue House

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council strongly objects this planning application due to:

- Height of the building
- Safety Concerns

23/01782/F – Bicester Vets

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection and welcomes this planning applications.

23/01808/F – 19 Sedgefield

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01840/F – The Sanctuary

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council concerns regarding this planning application due to:

- **Large Development – affecting the street scene**

23/01843/F – 98 Kestrel Way

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01858/F – 8 Newton Close

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01927/F – 43a George Street

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council strongly objects this planning application due to:

- High level of Public interests in this application.
- Objections raised by neighbouring residents at No 43 & 43B.
- Highway safety issues for vehicle movements on site and in a restricted area
- Lack of visibility splays both on and off site
- No parking spaces on site for blue badge drivers.
- Existing noise and light pollution levels causing a disturbance to neighbouring properties.
- To provide a 4th parking bay next to the waste bins and cycle rack may not be achievable.
- Safety concerns for pedestrians with vehicles being parked close to the footpath.
- A dropped kerb has been installed across the whole of the frontage at 43a George Street Bicester without prior approval.
- Not in keeping with the street scene.
- On street parking restrictions (double yellow lines) are required for highway safety issues on George Street, from the corner of West Street to
- The Oval and from the corner of Leach Road to Market End Way.
- George Street which is a narrow road already suffers from on street parking issues with vehicles parking on footpaths and grass verges.
- The footpath either side of George Street which is a narrow road is well used by pedestrians to access the Schools,
- Sports & Leisure Centre, the two recreational areas and is a route into the town centre.
- Concerns over the location at the front of the development and the number of household waste, recycling, garden and food waste bins being collected / left on the footpath.
- The Refuse Crews will only collect waste / recycling and food waste bins from the highway.
- Location of cycling facilities questionable.

59/2 Notification of planning decisions from Cherwell District Council
324 RESOLVED that Committee **NOTED** and **REVIEWED** planning decisions from Cherwell District Council.

60/2 Appeal Decision
324 RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council **NOTED** the Appeal Against Refusal.

61/2 Forward Plan
324 RESOLVED that committee **NOTED** and **REVIEWED** the Forward Plan.

Date of Next Meeting

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 5th September 2023 – 7pm, The Chamber Room

Close of meeting: 8.01pm

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 5 September 2023 at 19:00

CLOSE OF MEETING: Time Not Specified hrs

Minutes of the Planning Committee

A meeting of the **Planning Committee** was held on **Tuesday 8th August 2023** at **19:00 hrs** at the **The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS**.

Present:

Cllr Donna Ford
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Sam Holland
Cllr Damien Maguire
Cllr Nicholas Mawer
Cllr Christopher Pruden
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Jim Webb
Cllr Paul Wheatley

In Attendance:

Dominic Hilton
Paul Canning

48/2 Apologies for Absence

324 RESOLVED that apologies were received from Cllr Nick Cotter, Cllr Rachel Mallows and Cllr Rich Oliver.

49/2 Declarations of Interest

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50/2 Councillors are reminded to declare any interests on any item on this agenda in accordance with Bicester Town Council's Code of Conduct.
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51/2 Declarations of Interest for District & County Councillors

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52/2 Minutes of the Planning Meeting

324 RESOLVED that **MINUTES** of the following planning committee were **APPROVED**:

PL03/2324 – Tuesday 4th July 2023

53/2 Public Session

324 RESOLVED that Cllr Nick Mawer Entered the meeting at 19:04

54/2 Updates on large developments and associated issues**324****55/2 North West Bicester****324****56/2 Graven Hill****324****57/2 Other Business Strategic Sites****324**

It was requested that the Chairman of Planning Committee write to Oxfordshire County Council regarding their concerns with the A4095 / B4100 Banbury Road roundabout improvements.

58/2 Planning applications from Cherwell District Council**324**

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council commented on the following planning applications:

R3.0094/21 – Banbury Road Roundabout

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council strongly objects this planning application due to:

- Howes Lane Redevelopment needs to happen first
- Not Wanted by anyone in Bicester

23/01058/F – 7 Walpole Close

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning application.

23/01249/F – 84 Westacott Road

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01658/F Axis J9 Phase 1

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01711/REM Land North of Bicester Avenue

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01720/ADV – 25 Sheep Street

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01722/F – Bicester Park

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection and welcome this planning applications.

23/01731/F – Shell Chase

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council concerns regarding this planning application due to:

- Possible London Road Closure

- Land maybe required for London Road Redevelopment
- Negative impact on the environment and local allotment that this site backs onto.

23/01737/F – 29 Banbury Road

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council concerns regarding this planning application due to:

- **Large Development – affecting the street scene**
- **Negative impact on neighbours**
- **Overdevelopment of the site**

23/01747/F – 76 Longfields

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01756/F – 46 Isis Avenue

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01761/F – 88 Sheep Street

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01762/LB – 88 Sheep Street

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01771/F – Fortescue House

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council strongly objects this planning application due to:

- Height of the building
- Safety Concerns

23/01782/F – Bicester Vets

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection and welcomes this planning applications.

23/01808/F – 19 Sedgefield

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01840/F – The Sanctuary

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council concerns regarding this planning application due to:

- **Large Development – affecting the street scene**

23/01843/F – 98 Kestrel Way

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01858/F – 8 Newton Close

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council has no objection to this planning applications.

23/01927/F – 43a George Street

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council strongly objects this planning application due to:

- High level of Public interests in this application.
- Objections raised by neighbouring residents at No 43 & 43B.
- Highway safety issues for vehicle movements on site and in a restricted area
- Lack of visibility splays both on and off site
- No parking spaces on site for blue badge drivers.
- Existing noise and light pollution levels causing a disturbance to neighbouring properties.
- To provide a 4th parking bay next to the waste bins and cycle rack may not be achievable.
- Safety concerns for pedestrians with vehicles being parked close to the footpath.
- A dropped kerb has been installed across the whole of the frontage at 43a George Street Bicester without prior approval.
- Not in keeping with the street scene.
- On street parking restrictions (double yellow lines) are required for highway safety issues on George Street, from the corner of West Street to
- The Oval and from the corner of Leach Road to Market End Way.
- George Street which is a narrow road already suffers from on street parking issues with vehicles parking on footpaths and grass verges.
- The footpath either side of George Street which is a narrow road is well used by pedestrians to access the Schools,
- Sports & Leisure Centre, the two recreational areas and is a route into the town centre.
- Concerns over the location at the front of the development and the number of household waste, recycling, garden and food waste bins being collected / left on the footpath.
- The Refuse Crews will only collect waste / recycling and food waste bins from the highway.
- Location of cycling facilities questionable.

59/2 Notification of planning decisions from Cherwell District Council
324 RESOLVED that Committee **NOTED** and **REVIEWED** planning decisions from Cherwell District Council.

60/2 Appeal Decision
324 RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council **NOTED** the Appeal Against Refusal.

61/2 Forward Plan
324 RESOLVED that committee **NOTED** and **REVIEWED** the Forward Plan.

Date of Next Meeting

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 5th September 2023 – 7pm, The Chamber Room

Close of meeting: 8.01pm

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 5 September 2023 at 19:00

CLOSE OF MEETING: Time Not Specified hrs

Minutes of the Policy Committee

A meeting of the **Policy Committee** was held on **Monday 14th August 2023** at **19:00 hrs** at the **The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS**.

Present:

Cllr Rachel Mallows (Chairman)
Cllr Paul Wheatley (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Nicholas Mawer
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Damien Maguire
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Donna Ford (Substitute)

In Attendance:

Phil Evans, Town Clerk
Jodi Clarke, Office Administrator
Lynn Pratt, Feoffee Charity

16/2 Apologies for Absence

324 RESOLVED that apologies were received from:

- Cllr Cotter
- Cllr Holland who sent Cllr Ford as a Substitute.
- Cllr Oliver

17/2 Declarations of Interest

324 RESOLVED that declarations were received from Cllr Ford for her role at Cherwell District Council.

18/2 Minutes of Policy Committee

324 RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** the minutes from the following meeting with the amendments made to Cllr Wheatley's last name:

- **POL01/2324 – 12th June 2023 at 7:00pm.**

19/2 Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee

324 RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** the minutes from the following meeting:

- **PSC06/2223 – 12TH April 2023 at 19:30pm.**

Cllr Mawer arrived at 19:04pm.

20/2 Minutes of Traffic Advisory Group

324 RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED** the minutes from the following meeting:

- **BTAG06/2223 – 30th March 2023 at 14:00pm.**

21/2 Public Session

324 RESOLVED that the Chair for the Policy Committee brought the following discussion from item 7 forward:

- **Bicester Feoffee Charity – Annual Report & Account 2022 – 2023.**

Lynn Pratt Chair of the Feoffee Charity came in and gave a verbal presentation alongside the Feoffee report.

RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED** the report.

Residents from the Goldcrest Way area came to discuss the Sale of Land Policy. The residents explained the issues they face day to day and how they would like to resolve the present issues. Residents would like to purchase the land in question that is to the rear of their properties, in doing this they expressed they would take on the maintenance of the land if this was to go ahead.

The resident also expressed their condolences for a former employee Jerry McGrath that lost his life earlier this year.

RESOLVED that the Town clerk would check whether the land in question is being maintained & check the contractors last visit (Bicester Fields Side).

22/2 Major Town Initiatives

324 Cllr Ford expressed concerns that no representative was being sent to the Bicester Vision CIC meeting. Cllr Ford expressed the importance of attending these meetings, to which two have been missed this mayoral year.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk is to chase the Crime Commissioner (Matthew Barber).

RESOLVED that the committee **NOTED** the minutes from the following:

- **Bicester Vision CIC Executive Board Meeting: 8th June 2023**
- **Bicester Vision CIC Executive Board Meeting: 20th July 2023**

23/2 Policies for Review

324 Appendix 1 – GP6 Investment Policy is suspended.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk would speak with the Locum RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) and get a better understanding of a qualified Cilca clerks authority..

RESOLVED that the dates are incorrect and need amending.

Appendix 1.2- **RESOLVED** that GP7 Grant Aid Awarding Policy was **APPROVED** with the following amendments being made:

- Dates for review need correcting.

- Dates from the report don't add up to the policy.
- On section 3.5: Add application form.
- In section 3.9: Add Social Media

Appendix 1.3- **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk is to bring GP13 Sponsorship Policy back to the next Policy meeting with a termination clause.

Appendix 1.4- **RESOLVED** that the Committee **APPROVED** GP14 Partnership and outside bodies Policy with the amendments to the date:

Appendix 1.5- **RESOLVED** that the Committee **APPROVED** GP20 Allotment Inspection Policy with the following amendments to be made:

- Change the bullet points to section numbers.
- Change the dates.
- Change the site inspection months to – “Inspections of all allotments will take place at an appropriate time throughout the year.”
- Add email into the Procedure for plots out of specification section.

Phil Evans left the room at 20:02pm

Phil Evans entered the room 20:03pm

Appendix 1.6- **RESOLVED** that the Committee **APPROVED** GP12 Freedom of Information with the following amendments to be made:

- Change bullet points to section numbers.
- Change the dates.
- Change “Relationship with Data Protection” to “Relationship with Data Protection Act”

Appendix 1.7- **RESOLVED** that the Committee **APPROVED** GP27 Sale of Land Policy amendments:

- Remove the bullet points in section 4.
- Same text in section 2.1 & 2.2 as section 3.1 & 3.2
- Revision Table needed.

The Council **APPROVED** the **RECOMMENDATION** for the following reasons that impact:

- Environment
- Noise
- Pollution
- Access
- Future Ownership/development

24/2 Jubilee Lake

324 Committee **NOTED** the position and **APPROVED** the Town Clerk to persevere, understanding the impact should Thames Water close the open space.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk does the following:

- Look into adverse Possession.
- Look into ownership of pathways
- Speak with OCC about the public right of way.

25/2 Exclusion of Press and Public

324 **RESOLVED** that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by the reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

26/2 Lease Position (Standing)

324 **RESOLVED** that the committee **APPROVED** the lease's set out in APPENDIX 3 & APPENDIX 4.

Cllr Mawer thanked the Town Clerk for his perseverance on getting the lease sorted.

27/2 Mod Gov

324 **RESOLVED** that the Committee **APPROVED** with an unanimous vote.

28/2 Forward Plan

324 **RESOLVED** that the Committee **NOTED** the report.

RESOLVED that the Freedom of Interest be added to the forward plan.

29/2 Date of Next Meeting

324 Date of next meeting: 30th October at 19:00hrs

Date of next Meeting: Monday 30 October 2023 at 19:00

CLOSE OF MEETING: 21:09 hrs

Minutes of the Bicester Traffic Advisory Group

A meeting of the **Bicester Traffic Advisory Group** was held on **Thursday 27th July 2023** at **14:00 hrs** at the **The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS**.

Present:

Cllr Donna Ford – Chairman
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Rachel Mallows
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Michael Wain
Michael Hewitt
Mike Wasley
Miranda Markham

In Attendance:

Paul Canning – Service Manager
Dominic Hilton – Administration Officer (Civic and Democratic)

10 Apologies

RESOLVED that apologies were received from Cllr Lynn Pratt, Cllr Dan Sames and Peter Cox

11 Minutes of the Bicester Traffic Advisory Group

RESOLVED that minutes of the last meeting BTAG02/2324 – 22nd June 2023 are to be signed at the next meeting taking place on Thursday 21st September 2023.

12 Update of items outstanding not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

RESOLVED that there was nothing to report.

13 Report from Oxfordshire County Council Officer

1. Bicester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

A number of active travel schemes from the LCWIP are in development and/or delivery stages:

a. London Road

Active Travel Tranche 3 funding from the Government plus some developer funding is being utilised to deliver a cycle scheme from the Rodney House roundabout to the junction with Launton Road. The funding will primarily be focussed on the section up to and including Talisman Road because of the EWR work which could significantly change the highway network around the London Road level crossing. This Tranche 3 funding will also enable us to start to design an extension down the A41 toward Ploughley Road.

It has taken the team involved with this work some time to get the procurement of designers and contractors in place, but now that this has been completed, they will make progress and engage with local stakeholders. The aim is to have a scheme in on London Road by the end of March 2025.

b. Middleton Stoney Road

This is another Active Travel Tranche 3 scheme which the Delivery Team are working on now the contracts and teams are in place. This has a similar timescale in terms of delivery.

c. Bicester North Station to Bicester Village Station

There are some small funding allocations from the Department for Transport to enable us to start to look at schemes with approved LCWIPs. One of these funding allocations will enable us to look at the route between the two stations, with a focus on how to safely get cyclists through the two roundabouts from Buckingham Road to Queens Avenue for those that want to route that way.

d. Sheep Street

The County Council is revisiting active travel access through Sheep Street. Proposals for an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to enable cyclists to use the street are due to go to Cabinet Member Decisions in October. There have been concerns about such a proposal in the past, but with the need to encourage more people to cycle for short journeys it is no longer seen as appropriate to have the ban through this street.

Sheep Street is already being monitored so that there will be data before and after the ETRO is in place. Experimental Orders run for eighteen months and can be revoked or amended during that time.

2. Vendee Drive road safety improvements

OCC has commissioned our engineering consultants to undertake an independent safety review of the Vendee Drive roundabout. They have assessed collision data, previous road safety recommendations, the highway alignment, and the active travel network.

They have identified some measures that could be implemented relatively quickly and a number of medium- and longer-term options that would require additional funding and need wider consideration.

The report is currently being finalised and will be discussed with our local County Councillors and Cabinet Portfolio Holders; more detail can be presented at the next TAC.

3. A4095

During 2022 a few of the North West Bicester developers (A2Dominion, Hallam Land and Thames Valley Police) have been considering the design and delivery of the A4095 strategic link road, following the reallocation of the Growth Deal funding.

A2Dominion consulted on a potential revised scheme in Autumn 2022 but following the appeal decision for Albion Land and their additional employment area this has fixed the point at which the other developers will need to connect the remaining part of the road alignment to. A2Dominion have therefore moved to proposing an alignment closer to the masterplan version and the one that OCC was working on.

An updated route alignment for the central part of the SLR is now awaited, subject to the submission of a planning application soon.

4. EWR/LRLX

EWR made their route announcement at the end of May and held a drop-in session in Bicester last week.

They have a new technical partner on board who will work on the impact/solutions for the London Road level crossing. Over this period they will work closely with OCC and CDC, hold engagement workshops in September, and conclude with the statutory consultation in early 2024.

14 Report from Cherwell District Council Officer**1. Chiltern Railways Ticket Office Modernisation Proposals**

Consultation on the proposals, part of wider national station modernisation proposals, which would impact Bicester North station, closed on 26 July. The proposals also impact Banbury station. CDC Leader Cllr. Wood planned to respond to the consultation on the Council's behalf expressing concern at the proposals and the potential negative impact on vulnerable residents and members of our local communities.

2. Pioneer Square/Franklins House vehicular access

CDC is considering applying for traffic enforcement powers for the area immediately outside Franklins House as well as in the area owned by CDC outside Travelodge within the area controlled by electronic bollards (the 'entry' end for vehicles accessing the pedestrianised Pioneer Square area).

We are also working with local Sainsbury's representatives as well as with their estates management company Cushman and Wakefield to solve the ongoing issue with the electronic bollards at the Sainsbury's/Manorsfield road end of Pioneer Square (the 'exit' end for vehicles). These bollards appear not to be working correctly, if at all, potentially allowing unrestricted vehicle access from Manorsfield Road to the pedestrianised Pioneer Square/Bure Place area, with associated risks to safety.

3. Other

Updates on a number of other schemes and projects, including the A4095/ Strategic Link Road and EWR London Road level Crossing, are being shared by OCC, with whose Officers and Members CDC continues to work closely, within their own report and feedback.

15 Matters raised by Group Members/Residents

It was reported that drawings from Oxfordshire County Council are still outstanding in preparation for the 20mph consultation.

16 Forward Plan

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan was noted.

17 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 21st September 2023

Close of meeting: 3.36

Minutes of the Events Working Party

A meeting of the **Events Working Party** was held on **Wednesday 13th September 2023** at **19:00 hrs** at the **Council Chamber, Garth House, Launton Road, OX26 6PS**.

Present:

Cllr Christopher Pruden (Chairman)
Cllr Donna Ford
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Damien Maguire
Cllr Jim Webb

In Attendance:

Paul Canning – Service Manager
Shannon O'Connor – Office Administrator – Events and Marketing

23/ Apologies for Absence

2324 RESOLVED that apologies were received from Cllr Rich Oliver.

24/ Declarations of Interest

2324 RESOLVED that Cllr Christopher Pruden could have a Declaration of interest as he hosted a political stall at the Bicester Pride event 2023.

25/ Confirmed Minutes

2324 UN-RESOLVED as the events working party minutes from Wednesday 5th July were not included into the agenda pack.

26/ Markets Update

2324 Committee did **NOT** receive a market update report from Cherwell District Council.

27/ Election of Chair

2324 RESOLVED that Cllr Christopher Pruden is the elected chair of the Events Working Party.

28/ Bicester Town Council Events

2324 RESOLVED that the Working Party **REVIEWED** and **COMMENTED** on the following events:

- Armed Forces Day
- Cancelled Music event 1
- 80's Music night

Cllr's **COMMENTED** on tower lights and toilets for the 80's night and suggested in 2024 we have more.

- Christmas light switch on report
- Event dates for 2024
- Advertising plan for BTC events, 2024

29/ Other Events

2324 RESOLVED that Bicester Pride gave an update on how the Bicester Pride event went and proposed a new date for 2024 – 7th September 2024
Cllrs recommended Bicester Pride get their open space application in ASAP.

RESOLVED that OYAP provided an update on the current status, OYAP announced they will be stopping works and will begin to phase out at the end of 2023

30/ Community

2324 RESOLVED that Bumble Creative provided an introduction to themselves, officers are due to meet with Nicolette and discuss the working relationship for BTC events and the community involvement.

31/ Forward Plan

2324 RESOLVED that the working party **REVIEWED** and **COMMENTED** on the Forward Plan

- Christmas light switch on update
- Christmas light trail event plan

Date of next Meeting: Wednesday 8 November 2023 at 19:00

Minutes of the Bicester Town Council Personnel Sub-Committee Meeting

A meeting of the **Bicester Town Council Personnel Sub-Committee PSC02-2324** was held on **Wednesday 12th July 2023** at **19:00hrs** in the Garth House.

Present:

Cllr Chris Pruden – (Chair)
Cllr Rachel Mallows
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Tom Beckett
Cllr Rachel Mallows

In Attendance:

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

1. Appointment of Vice Chair

The subcommittee requested that this item be deferred until the full sub-committee is present.

2. Apologies for Absence

The Sub committee was fully attended

3. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED No Declarations were made.

4. Minutes from previous Personnel Meetings

RESOLVED Councillors **APPROVED** the minutes for the following meetings as an accurate representation on the meeting.

PSC01-2324 –held on 21st June 2023

5. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items set out below on the grounds that publicly would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

6. Staff update

RESOLVED Councillors were in agreement with the recruitment package for the responsible finance officer role, noting the staff performance charts

Close of Meeting: 19:51

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 20th November 2023

Mayors Report

Chairman: Councillor Harry Knight

Contact: harry.knight@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Contact: 01869 252915 phil.evans@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Overview

During the period of 14th August – 12th November the following visits were made:

The Mayor and his Consort attended the following functions:

September

- 9th – Bicester Pride Festival
- 12th – Bicester Village Unlock Future Funds Celebration
- 28th – Bicester Library Volunteer Presentation
- 30th – 1 Bicester Intrepid Scouts Macmillan Coffee Morning

October

- 27th – Unveiling of King Charles III Portrait, Bicester Hotel, Golf and Spa

November

- 11th – Caversfield Remembrance Day Service, St Lawrences Church
- 12th – Bicester Remembrance Day Service and Parade followed by lunch at the Officers Mess

The Deputy Mayor attending the following functions:

September

- 6th September Oxfordshire Scouts AGM
- 10th September Battle of Britain Service Carterton

October

- 1st – Mayor of Thame, Civic Service
- 17th – St Frideswide Afternoon Tea and Civic Service at Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford
- 24th – Bicester Twinning

November

- 12th – Bicester Remembrance Day Service and Parade followed by lunch at the Officers Mess

BTC05/2324
Monday 20th November 2023

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Full Council Report

Monday 20th November 2023

Proposed Changes to Bicester Wards

Chairman: Harry Knight

Telephone: 01869 252915 harry.knight@Bicester.gov.uk

Town Clerk: Phil Evans

Contact: 01869 252915 phil.evans@Bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All

1. Background

As part a review of the Divisions of Oxfordshire County, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is making some recommendations for changes to Bicester Town/Parish. Specifically, there are recommending an increase from four Town Wards to seven and from 15 Town Councillors to 22.

Details can be found of page 29 of this document:

https://www.lgbce.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/full_report_oxfordshire.pdf

The proposed new wards (Town Wards in orange) are shown on a map here:

https://www.lgbce.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/bicester_parish_wards.jpg

The consultation is open until 11th December.

The final recommendations will be published in March 2024.

Will this affect the BTC elections in May 2027 and that any by-elections between now and then, if any, will be based on the current wards. The proposal gives added impetus to getting a new council building before then and as part of our reason for getting a new building would be to accommodate extra councillors on the recommendation of the Commission, we may be able to get a grant towards the cost of the new building.

2. Recommendation

Councillors are asked to **REVIEW** and **DISCUSS** the above.

Hardwick East	1
Hardwick West	3
Neithrop North	1
Neithrop South	1
Park Road	1
Ruscote	3
Town Centre	1
Woodgreen	1

92 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Bicester Town Council.

Draft recommendations

Bicester Town Council should comprise 22 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	5
Greenwood	1
North	4
South	4
South West	3
Village	1
West	4

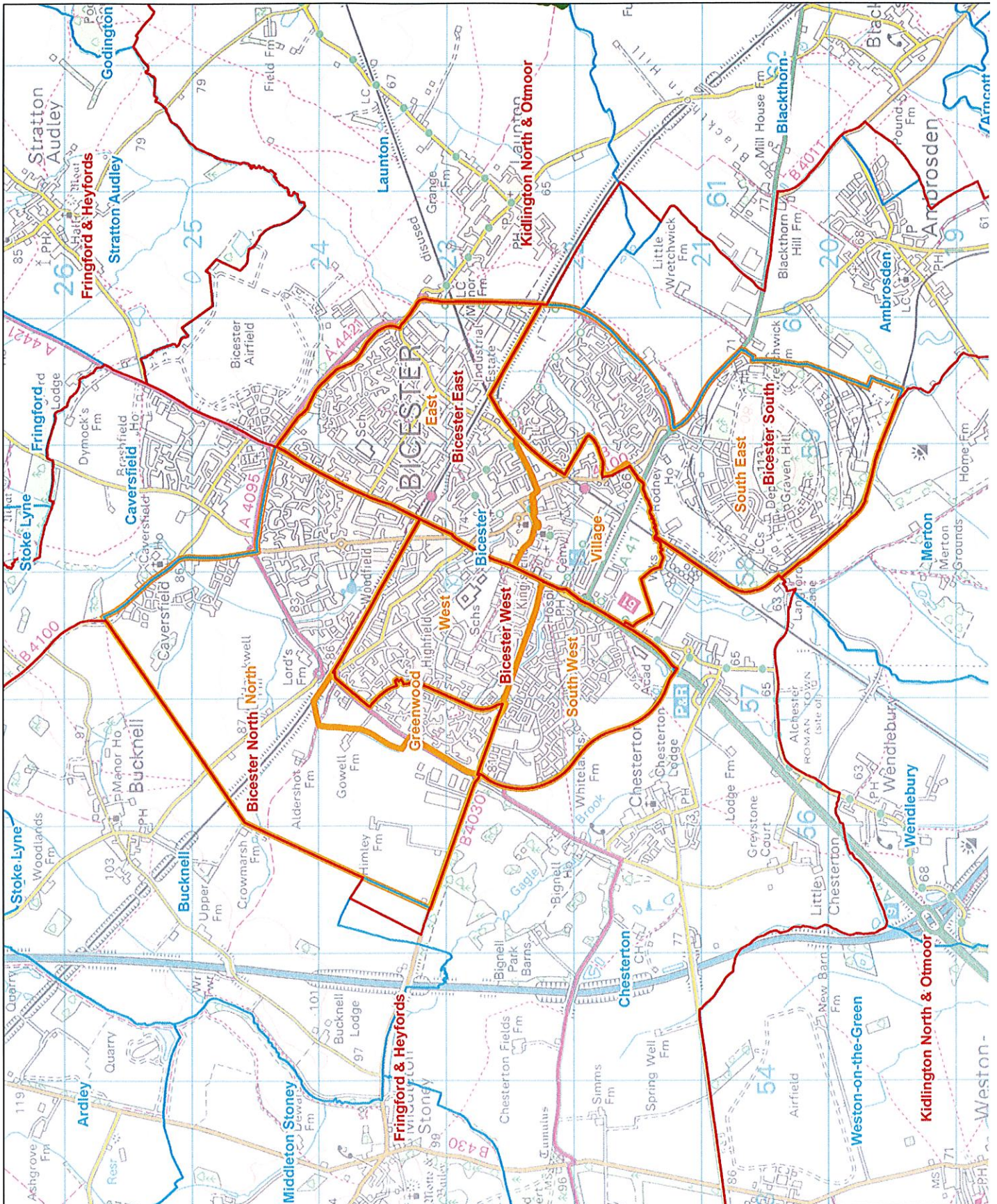
93 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Didcot Town Council.

Draft recommendations

Didcot Town Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing eight wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
All Saints	5
Broadway	1
Jubilee	1
Ladygrove	6
Millbrook	1
Northbourne	3
Orchard	1
Park	3

94 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Henley-on-Thames Town Council.

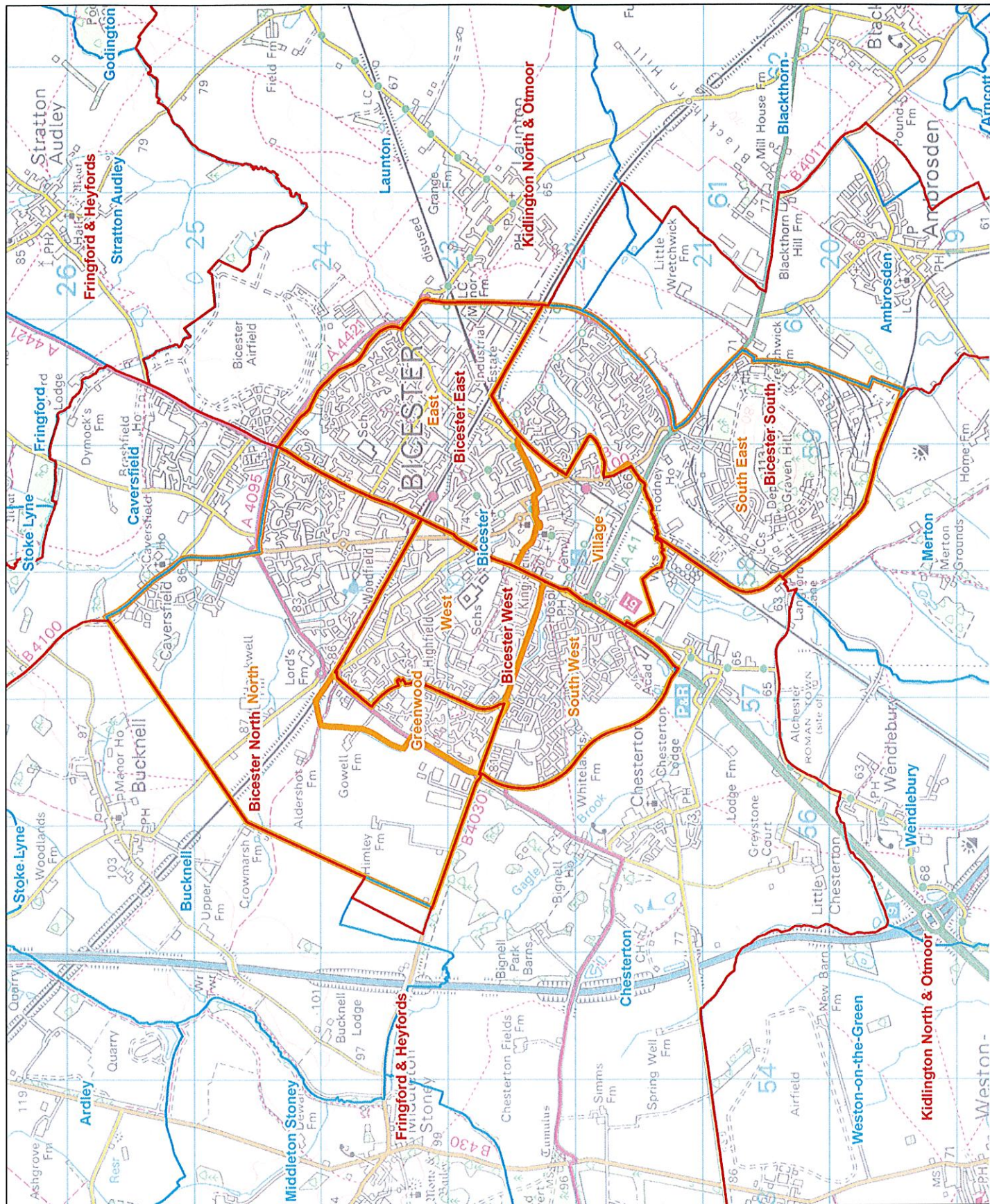


The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Parish Warding Arrangements for Bicester

- District
- Draft Recommendations
- Parish
- Parish Ward
- Mask

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The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Parish Warding Arrangements for Bicester

- District
- Draft Recommendations
- Parish
- Parish Ward
- Mask

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**BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL
Full Council Report**

Monday 20th November 2023

The Bicester School

Chairman: Harry Knight

Telephone: 01869 252915 harry.knight@Bicester.gov.uk

Town Clerk: Phil Evans

Contact: 01869 252915 phil.evans@Bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All

1. Background

The Headmaster from the Bicester School has approached the Town Clerk in a request for school governors from the community who do not have children in the Bicester School.

The Bicester School already have a full complement of parent governors, and is asking if there are any suggestions for potential community governors, at the council or elsewhere?

2. Recommendation

Councillors are asked to **CONSIDER** this request.

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Full Council Report

Monday 20th November 2023

Conclusion of Audit of the 2022/23 Accounts

Chairman: Harry Knight

Telephone: 01869 252915 harry.knight@Bicester.gov.uk

Locum RFO: Louise Steele

Contact: 01869 252915 louise.steele@Bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Overview

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to share the report of the Council's external auditor and to update Council on the action taken to address the findings and comments of the auditor.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Council agreed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) at its meeting on 19th June 2023. Thereafter the AGAR was submitted to the external auditor and a limited assurance review was undertaken and completed on 10 September 2023 with the report being received by officers on 13 September 2023.
- 2.2. In accordance with regulations a notice of conclusion of audit and the final version of the AGAR was placed on the council's website (and displayed on a public noticeboard) from 29 September 2023.

3. Findings

- 3.1. The external auditor's letter to the Clerk and the audit report are annexed to this report. The external auditor has qualified the 2022/23 accounts because the locum RFO was unable to provide evidence that the Council had undertaken a review of the effectiveness of internal control during the course of the financial year 2022/23. As a consequence the Council should have answered "no" to assertion 2 on the Annual Governance Statement.

- 3.2. On 10 October 2023 the Finance Committee did undertake an initial review of the effectiveness of internal control and has agreed an action plan which it will work through. Implementing the action plan will inform a further review to be conducted by Full Council before the end of the financial year
- 3.3. Generously the external auditor has brought no other matters to the attention of the authority (Full Council) but a further matter is raised in the letter to the Clerk. That is the inadequacy of the minute recording the approval of the AGAR on 19 June 2023.
- 3.4. The Clerk and the locum RFO had recognised the inadequacy of the draft minute and redrafted it as follows
- “**RESOLVED** that Council receive the report of the Internal Auditor marking the conclusion of the 2023/24 internal audit. The signed version for inclusion in the in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was also received.*
- It was Further **RESOLVED** that the Annual Governance Statement with responses to the assertions recommended by the Internal Auditor and officers be **APPROVED**.*
- Subsequent to the approval of the Annual Governance Statement Council considered the Annual Statement of Accounts and **RESOLVED** that Council **APPROVED** the figures on page 5 of the Annual Return.”*
- 3.5. However, the minute version distributed to and agreed by Full Council was the first, inadequate draft and therefore the external auditor’s observation is entirely accepted. In 2024 and subsequent years Council should consider the internal audit report, the Annual Governance Statement and the Statement of Accounts as three separate agenda items and in the order listed in this paragraph. The internal audit report first because that informs the Annual Governance Statement, the Annual Governance Statement because that must be agreed before the Statement of Accounts and then the Statement of Accounts.
- 3.6. For 2024 care must be taken to arrange the final internal audit visit with enough time for the subsequent report to be available for distribution to Full Council with the agenda papers (which will include the AGAR).

4. Recommendations

4.1. It is recommended that:

- **Full Council RECEIVES the report of the external auditor;**
- **NOTES that Finance Committee has undertaken an initial review of the effectiveness of internal controls; and**
- **NOTES the care with which the AGAR should be considered and minuted in the future.**

Our ref: 979/1387267

12 September 2023

Mr P Evans
Bicester Town Council
The Garth
Launton Road
Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX26 0JB

Moore East Midlands
Oakley House
Headway Business Park
3 Saxon Way West
Corby
NN18 9EZ
T 01536 461900

Moore East Midlands
Rutland House
Minerva Business Park
Lynch Wood
Peterborough
PE2 6PZ
T 01733 397300

www.moore.co.uk

Dear Phil

Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year ended 31 March 2023

Please find enclosed the signed External Audit Report to accompany your Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2023.

We also enclose a note of our charges based on the fixed rate audit fee as set by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd.

Authorities who have not claimed exemption

Regulation 13 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 stipulate that Authorities, who are not inactive Authorities, must publish the following (including on the Authority's website):

- (a) The Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement
- (b) The auditor's certificate and opinion
- (c) Any public interest report or other recommendation of the auditor.
- (d) A form of Notice of Conclusion of Annual Audit

We draw your attention to the following points. The Council is required to approve Section 1 and 2 of the return individually in a specified order. The minute references used were the same on both sections 1 and 2 and the minutes online do not specify an approval order. In future the minutes should reflect the approval order. Best practice would be to recorded these on separate minute references which can be reflected directly on the face of the AGAR.

A Notice of Conclusion of Audit form is available, if required, on our website using the link here <https://www.moore.co.uk/sectors/public-sector/smaller-authorities>.

The notice must also state that an elector may inspect those documents at all reasonable times and without payment. The address and times when this inspection may be carried out must also be given.

Yours sincerely



Moore

Encs.

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Bicester Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it does not provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>.

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

2 External auditor report 2022/23

Except for the matter reported below on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with the Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The Council has confirmed that during the year they did not review certain governance documents including their internal controls. The Council is required to review the effectiveness of its internal controls on an annual basis as per the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 section 6 paragraph 1 and the Practitioners Guide at paragraph 1.20. Therefore the council should have provided a 'no' response at assertion 2.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

NONE

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Moore".

Date

10/09/2023

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Full Council Report

Monday 20th November 2023

Independence & Competence of the Internal Auditor

Chairman: Harry Knight

Telephone: 01869 252915 harry.knight@Bicester.gov.uk

Locum RFO: Louise Steele

Contact: 01869 252915 louise.steele@Bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Overview

The purpose of this report is to ask Council to consider the independence and competence of the internal auditor and to receive the Finance Committee's recommendations following its review of the same.

2. Background & Findings

The report considered by the Finance Committee is appended to this report and the background and findings are as set in that document.

The report is appended without the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners' Guide published by NALC which is a bulky document. The other annexes – the letter of engagement and the proposal of a three year deal are included

3. Recommendations

At its meeting held on 10 October 2023 the Finance Committee resolved to make the following recommendations to Full Council, that:

- Annually, the agenda for the first meeting of Council following Mayor Making includes the appointment of the Internal Auditor as a standing item;
- In advance of each of the above meetings the Finance Committee considers the independence and competence of the putative internal auditor;
- The ongoing appointment of Mulberry & Co as the Council's internal auditor for the financial year 2023/24 be confirmed; and
- Mulberry & Co also be appointed for the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26 in order to take advantage of a three-year fixed fee offer.

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Tuesday 10th October 2023

Independence & Competence of the Internal Auditor

Chairman: Councillor Paul Wheatley

Contact: paul.wheatley@bicester.gov.uk

Louise Steele – Locum Responsible Financial Officer

Contact: 01869 252915 louise.steele@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Overview

The purpose of this report is to:

- confirm the current appointment of the internal auditor;
- consider a three-year deal; and
- review the independence and competence of the Council's internal auditor in accordance with good practice guidance offered by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners' Guide published by NALC.

2. Background

It is a requirement that each local authority demonstrates annually that it has considered the independence of its internal auditor.

Best practice guidance for Internal Audit may be found in Section 4 the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners' Guide published by NALC. That guidance is reproduced as an annexe to this report. The Practitioners' Guide is updated annually and the version annexed is the most recent published in March 2023.

The guide says the following about Independence (paras 4.9-4.0):

- "Independence requires the absence of any actual or perceived conflict of interest. It means that whoever carries out the internal audit role does not have any involvement in, or responsibility for, the financial decision making, management or control of the authority, or for the authority's financial controls and procedures.
- A current or recent authority member, who cannot demonstrate independence from decisions in the year to be audited, cannot be its internal auditor. Similarly, it would not be appropriate for any individual or firm with a personal connection to a member or officer of the authority to be appointed. Conflicts of interest must be avoided, such as in cases where an external provider of accounting software or services to the authority, also offers internal audit services through an associate company, firm or individual.

- There is no requirement to rotate auditors but the independence of the appointed person or firm should be reviewed every year with regard to; personal independence, financial independence, and professional independence.”

Further the following guidance is offered on the subject of Competence:

- “Evidence as to competence might include letters of recommendation from other similar Authorities.”

3. Findings

The Council’s current internal auditor – Mulberry & Co was first appointed in the 2017/18 financial year as an outcome of a tendering exercise that took place in October 2017. The initial contract covered the internal audit for the years ended 31 March 2018, 2019 and 2020 with an option to extend to cover the years ended 31 March 2021 and 2022. It is assumed that the appointment was extended and currently remains ongoing.

Mulberry & Co has an extensive practice across the south-east of England.

Mulberry & Co is a member of the internal Audit Forum which was set up in 2022 with the following aims:

- To promote the provision of high-quality Parish and Town Council internal audits.
- To promote the provision of high-quality internal auditors.
- To foster good working relationships between internal auditors, councils and external auditors.

Mulberry & Co passes the independence test, in that there is an absence of any actual or perceived conflict of interest and the size of the practice indicates that there is also financial and professional independence. The competence test is also passed in that the evidence demonstrates that Mulberry & Co has an established practice in local council audit.

After six years of one internal auditor, a local council might reasonably choose to test the market and consider re-tendering the provision of internal audit services. However, in a council that has faced, and continues to face, a turnover of finance staff there is a lot to be said for continuity in internal audit and the interim RFO suggests that internal audit services should not be tendered until the staffing situation is more stable. It is suggested that the Council ratifies the appointment of its internal auditor at each Annual Meeting of the Council (held each year in May).

The letter of engagement for 2023/24 is attached as an annexe to this report and the Committee is asked to review it.

Also annexed to this report is a proposal from Mulberry & Co to enter a three-year deal. The Committee is asked to consider this proposal and make recommendations to Full Council as appropriate.

Before the end of the financial year this Committee needs to undertake the annual review of the effectiveness of internal audit

4. Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- the agenda for the Annual Meeting of Council includes the appointment of the Internal Auditor as a standing item;
- in advance of each Annual Meeting of Council the Finance Committee considers the independence and competence of the putative internal auditor; and
- that this Committee makes a recommendation to Full Council that the ongoing appointment of Mulberry & Co as the Council's internal auditor for the financial year 2023/24 be confirmed.
- that the Committee considers making a recommendation to Full Council regarding the appointment of Mulberry & Co for 2024/25 & 2025/26 (in addition to 2023/24).



Our Ref: MARK/BIC001

Mrs L Steele
Bicester Town Council
The Garth
Launton Road
Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX26 6PS

06 September 2023

Dear Mrs Steele,

Engagement Letter – Local Authority

We are pleased to accept the instruction to act as internal auditors for the Council and are writing to confirm the terms of our appointment outlined below. The purpose of this engagement letter is to set out the basis on which we are engaged to act as internal auditors and our respective areas of responsibility, it should be read in conjunction with our standard terms and conditions.

We are bound by the ethical requirements of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, and accept instructions to act for you on the basis that we will act in accordance with those ethical requirements. A copy of these requirements can be viewed at our offices on request or can be seen at www.accaglobal.com.

1. Period of engagement

- a. This letter is effective for accounting periods up to and including 31st March 2024. (The 2023/24 Council year)
- b. It replaces all previous engagement letters. The previously agreed commencement date for this engagement still applies.
- c. We will deal with matters arising in respect of periods prior to the above period as appropriate.

2. Responsibilities of the Council and Internal auditors

- a. The council is responsible for ensuring that the council maintains adequate accounting records and for preparing financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with current practices and guidelines.
- b. You are also responsible for making available to us, as and when required, all the council's accounting records and all other relevant records and related information, including minutes of all meetings. We are entitled to require from the council's officers and employees such other information and explanations as we think necessary for the performance of our duties as internal auditors.
- c. We have a statutory responsibility to report to the external auditors whether in our opinion the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with current practices and guidelines as outlined in JPAG Practitioners guide. In forming this opinion, we shall:
 - i. Review the accounting records and all other relevant records and related information, including minutes of all meetings.

- ii. If deemed necessary, conduct two or more reviews per annum to verify both the procedural and financial aspects of the council.
 - iii. Report to you in writing any such adjustments that we may consider necessary, or those areas where we think your systems may require improvement.
 - iv. Sign off the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) as internal auditors.
- d. We have a professional responsibility to report if the financial statements do not comply with applicable proper practices, unless in our opinion the non-compliance is justified in the circumstances. In determining whether or not the departure is justified we consider:
 - i. whether the departure is required in order for the financial statements to give a true and fair view; and
 - ii. whether adequate disclosure has been made concerning the departure
- e. As with other professional services firms, we are required to identify our clients for the purposes of the UK anti-money laundering legislation. We are likely to request from you, and retain, some information and documentation for these purposes and/or to make searches of appropriate databases. If we are not able to obtain satisfactory evidence of your identity within a reasonable time, there may be circumstances in which we are not able to proceed with the audit appointment.
- f. The provision of audit services is a business in the regulated sector under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and, as such, partners and staff in audit firms have to comply with this legislation which includes provisions that may require us to make a money laundering disclosure in relation to information we obtain as part of our normal audit work. It is not our practice to inform you when such a disclosure is made or the reasons for it because of the restrictions imposed by the 'tipping off' provisions of the legislation.

3. Scope of Audit

- a. Our audit will be conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines, and will include such tests of transactions and of the existence, ownership and valuation of assets and liabilities as we consider necessary.
- b. We shall obtain an understanding of the accounting and internal control systems in order to assess their adequacy as a basis for the preparation of the financial statements and to establish whether proper accounting records have been maintained by the council. We shall expect to obtain such appropriate evidence as we consider sufficient to enable us to draw reasonable conclusions there from.
- c. The nature and extent of our procedures will vary according to our assessment of the council's accounting system and, where we wish to place reliance on it, the internal control system, and may cover any aspect of the business's operations that we consider appropriate. Our audit is not designed to identify all significant weaknesses in the council's systems but, if such weaknesses come to our notice during the course of our audit which we think should be brought to your attention, we shall report them to you. We accept no duty or responsibility to any other third party as concerns our reports.
- d. As part of our normal audit procedures, we may request you to provide written confirmation of certain oral representations which we have received from you during the course of the audit on matters having a material effect on the financial statements. In particular, where we bring misstatements in the accounts to your attention that are not adjusted, we shall require written representation of your reasons.
- e. In order to assist us with the examination of your financial statements, we shall request sight of all documents or statements, including minutes and reports, which are due to be issued with the financial statements. We are also entitled to attend all general meetings of the council and to receive notice of all such meetings.
- f. The responsibility of safeguarding the assets of the council and for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and non-compliance with law or regulations rests with the council. However, we shall endeavour to plan our audit so that we have a reasonable expectation of detecting material misstatements in the financial statements or accounting records (including those resulting from fraud, error or non-compliance

with law or regulations), but our examination should not be relied upon to disclose all such material misstatements or frauds, errors or instances of non-compliance as may exist.

- g. Once we have issued/uploaded our report we have no further direct responsibility in relation to the financial statements for that financial year. However, we expect that you will inform us of any changes occurring between the date of our report and submission to the external auditor.
- h. We appreciate that the present size of your council may render it uneconomic to create a system of internal control based on the segregation of duties for different functions within each area of the council. In planning and performing our audit work we shall take account of this.

4. Electronic Publication

- a. Where audited financial information is published on a website or by other electronic means, it is your responsibility to ensure that any such publication properly presents the financial information and auditor's report. We reserve the right to withhold consent to the electronic publication of our report or the financial statements if they are to be published in an inappropriate manner.
- b. It is your responsibility to ensure there are controls in place to prevent or detect quickly any changes to electronically published information. We are not required to carry out ongoing review of the information after it is first published. The maintenance and integrity of electronically published information is your responsibility and we accept no responsibility for changes made to audited information after it is first posted.

5. Communication

- a. In order to ensure that there is effective two-way communication between us we set out below the expected form and timing of such communications
 - i. We may arrange a meeting to discuss the forthcoming audit prior to the expected start date.
 - ii. We may arrange a meeting to discuss any matters arising from completing the on-site work.
 - iii. We shall of course contact you on a regular basis regarding both audit and other matters.
 - iv. Our report will be issued in .Pdf format via a secure server, which is password protected.

6. Other services

- a. You may request that we provide other services from time to time. We will issue a separate letter of engagement and scope of work to be performed accordingly. Because rules and regulations frequently change you must ask us to confirm any advice already given if a transaction is delayed or a similar transaction is to be undertaken.

7. Limitation of liability

- a. We specifically draw your attention to our standard terms and conditions which set out the basis on which we limit our liability to you and to others.
- b. There are no third Parties that we have agreed should be entitled to rely on the work done pursuant to this engagement letter other than the external auditors.

8. Fees

- a. Our fees are calculated using a stand rate per hour, plus disbursements and VAT at the standard applicable rate.
- b. Our fees for the period of your engagement letter are £65 per hour + VAT
- c. Where applicable we charge £0.45p per mile for travel from the auditors home address.
- d. Our fees are payable on presentation of invoice.

9. Cancellation of Services

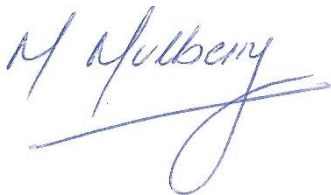
- a. Services can be cancelled at any time in writing
- b. Cancellation will be effective from the end of the period to which this letter of engagement applies.
(para 1a.)

- c. All outstanding fees become payable

10. Agreement of terms

- a. This letter supersedes any previous engagement letter. Once it has been agreed, this letter will remain effective until it is replaced.
- b. If this letter is not in accordance with your understanding of the scope of our engagement or your circumstances have changed, please let us know
- c. This letter should be read in conjunction with the firm's standard terms and conditions.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Mulberry', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mulberry & Co

We confirm that by electronically approving this document we are agreeing that we have read and understood the contents of this letter and related terms and conditions and further agree that it accurately reflects our fair understanding of the services that we require you to undertake.

Louise Steele

From: Anna Beams <anna@mulberryandco.co.uk>
Sent: 06 September 2023 09:16
To: Louise Steele
Subject: Internal Audit Update

Dear Clerk/RFO

Thank you for using Mulberry & Co as your internal auditor. This email outlines our amended pricing structure for 2023-24 onwards and includes a reminder of the benefits of continuing to receive your internal audit provision through us. Our internal audit charges have not increased since 2010, however for the 2023/24 financial year, we are increasing our hourly rate to £65 per hour. This is due to the increased costs incurred by the business and is reflective of other comparative companies offering internal audit provision across the sector.

As with other service providers to local authorities, we are now able to offer a long-term 3-year agreement for the provision of internal audit services. For those councils choosing to take up this option, the £65 rate will be fixed for the three-year period of your updated engagement letter.

Please contact anna@mulberryandco.co.uk to let us know if you would like to take advantage of this offer if you haven't already.

The other benefits of being an internal audit client of Mulberry & Co include:

- Year-round internal audit support and advice from your assigned internal auditor
- Updates throughout the year of key changes to proper practices
- Ongoing financial and governance support from our dedicated Local Authority team members
- Discounted rates on the range of councillor and officer training courses (more information available via this [link](#))
- Provision of locum support *
- Provision of dedicated reviews of councils policies and procedures *

** Additional costs apply*

Mulberry & Co has been at the leading edge of internal audit provision across the southeast for the last fifteen years and we have now expanded our portfolio to include Town and Parish Councils in 16 counties across the country as well as continuing to support London's only Parish Council.

Last year, we were instrumental in the establishment of the Internal Audit Forum, a group recognised by NALC as 'a pivotal partner in promoting the growth, development and understanding of internal audits to local councils' and we play a key role in developing the forum and continuing to improve the standards of internal audit.

Our expanding team of dedicated local authority specialists have wide-ranging sector experience and can support councils in a variety of ways. We also have some exciting developments planned over the coming year, including a new website dedicated to the local authority sector, as we aim to ensure we continue to provide the level of expert support and advice you have become accustomed to. We look forward to continuing to work with you and will be issuing your engagement letter very soon.

Mulberry & Co Local Authority Team

Anna Beams, Local Authority Officer



Mulberry & Co

DD 03303 450597

Office 01483 423 054

[Training Programme for Local Councils](#)

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Mulberry & Co Chartered Certified Accountants, Registered Auditors & Chartered Tax Advisers. 9 Pound Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1BX