

Bicester Town Council



BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

Bicester Town Council Meeting

Ref: BTC06/2425

Monday 20th January 2025 at 19:00hrs

**Council Chamber, Garth House, Launton Road, OX26
6PS**

Members:

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

Other Circulation:

Cllr John Broad, Cllr Simon Lytton, Cllr Calum Miller, Cllr Michael Waine,
Cllr Rob Parkinson and Cllr Frank Ideh



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Tuesday 14th January 2025,

To all members of the Bicester Town Council,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Full Council that will be held on Monday 20th January 2025, in the Council Chambers based within the Garth House, Launton Road, OX26 6PS to commence at 19:00 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 - 7)

To confirm the **MINUTES** and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Town Council Meeting:

- **BTC05/2425 – Monday 14th October 2024**

5. Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

(Pages 8 - 12)

To confirm the **MINUTES** and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Finance Committee Meeting:

- **FIN02/2425 – Tuesday 9th July 2024**

6. Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting (Pages 13 - 17)

To confirm the **MINUTES** and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Planning Committee Meeting:

- **PL03/2425 – Tuesday 3rd September 2024**

7. Minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting (Pages 18 – 27)

To confirm the **MINUTES** and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Policy Committee Meeting:

- **POL01/2425 – Tuesday 18th June 2024**
- **POL02/2425 – Monday 16th September 2024**
- **POL03/2425 – Tuesday 8th October 2024**

8. Minutes of the Working Parties Meetings (Pages 28 - 30)

To confirm the **MINUTES** and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Working Party Group Meeting:

- **BTAG02/2425 – Thursday 19th September 2024**

9. Market Square CDC Update

A verbal report will be offered from officers at CDC to offer updates on progress to the above project.

10. Budget Setting for 2025/2026 (Full detail report Appendix 2) (Pages 31 – 35)

Councillors are asked to **APPROVE** the budgets for the following financial year.

- 10.1 Breakdown for Precept Request
- 10.2 Alternative Budget Motion Proposal by Cllr Ford

Item 11.2 to be addressed before finalising Report 11 (Full detail Report APPENDIX 3)

11. Financial Report(s) Pass Through (Pages 36 - 41)

In line with Finance Regulations the Council is asked to **APPROVE** the following Reports that have been approved through the relevant committees.

- 11.1 Outdoor Team Rest Room
- 11.2 Asset Disposal
- 11.3 Earmarked Reserve spends

12. Conclusion of Audit (Audit Report APPENDIX 1 (Page 52)) (Pages 42 - 48)

- 12.1 Interim Audit
- 12.2 Independence and competence of the internal auditor
- 12.3 Notice of conclusion of audit and external auditors report

Councillors are asked to **APPROVE** the Audit conclusion.

13. Councillor Stepping Down from Role (Page 49)

Councillors are asked to **APPROVE** an adjustment to roles for the year 2024/2025

14. Mayor's Report

(Pages 50 - 51)

Councillors are asked to **NOTE** the Mayor's Report.

15. Councillor Motion

(Page 52)

Councillors asked to **APPROVE** the following motions as laid out by the proposer Cllr Sam Holland.

16. Exclusion of Press and Public

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.

17. Whitelands Lease Legal Steer

A verbal report will be offered from our legal advisor as to the councils position on the delay incurred from the new lease/ Service level agreement being received by Cherwell District

18. Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 10th March 2025 – 7pm, The Chamber Room, Garth House

BTC05/2425

Minutes of the Bicester Town Council

A meeting of the Bicester Town Council was held on **Monday 14th October 2024** at 19:00 hrs at The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS.

Present:

Cllr Damien Maguire(Chair)
 Cllr Paul Wheatley
 Cllr Tom Beckett
 Cllr Dan Hallett
 Cllr Sam Holland
 Cllr Rachel Mallows
 Cllr Nick Mawer
 Cllr Alisa Russell
 Cllr Jim Webb
 Cllr Nick Cotter
 Cllr Donna Ford
 Cllr Chris Pruden
 Cllr John Willet

In Attendance:

Paul Canning – Deputy Town Clerk

26/ Apologies for Absence

2425 RESOLVED that apologies for absence were received from Cllr Harry Knight.

27/ Declarations of Interest

2425 RESOLVED that no declarations of interest were received.

28/ Public Session

2425 RESOLVED that no members of the public were present.

29/ Minutes of Town Council Meeting

2425 RESOLVED that Council **APPROVED** the **MINUTES** and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following meetings:

- BTC06/2324 – Monday 16th January 2024
- BTC07/2324 – Monday 11th March 2024
- BTC7A/2324 – Tuesday 26th March 2024
- BTC02/2425 – Monday 20th March 2024
- BTC04/2425 – Monday 20th March 2024

30/ Minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting

Minutes: BTC05/2425: Bicester Town Council
 Monday 14th October 2024

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Signed Dated

2425 RESOLVED that Council APPROVED the MINUTES and RESOLUTIONS contained in the minutes of the following meeting:

- ENV01/2425 Monday 17th June 2024



31/ Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

2425 RESOLVED that Council APPROVED the MINUTES and RESOLUTIONS contained in the minutes of the following meeting:

- FIN01/2425 – Tuesday 4th June 2024

32/ Minutes of the Planning committee Meeting

2425 RESOLVED that Council APPROVED the MINUTES and RESOLUTIONS contained in the minutes of the following meetings:

- PL01/2425 -Tuesday 11th June 2024
- PL02/2425 -Tuesday 18th June 2024

33/ Minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting

2425 RESOLVED that Council APPROVED the MINUTES and RESOLUTIONS contained in the minutes of the following meetings:

- POL06/2324- Monday 22nd April 2024
- POL01/2425 –Tuesday 18th June 2024

34/ Minutes of the Working Parties Meeting

2425 RESOLVED that Council APPROVED the MINUTES and RESOLUTIONS contained in the minutes of the following meetings:

- BE01/2425 – Thursday 23rd May 2024
- BTAG01/2425 Thursday 13th June 2024
- CSWG01/2425 Thursday 20th June 2024

35/ Motion – Local Neighbourhood plan

2425 RESOLVED that a presentation was received on the plan

Cllr Beckett presented the need for a local Neighbourhood plan involving residents as part of a larger group to put forward a plan for localism and hoped it would be approved with cross party support.

Councillors ensued a discussion on the motion with speakers, including Cllr Paul Wheatley, who expressed that the Town Clerk is happy to take the lead with the project, though concerns regarding the amount of time it could take.

Cllr Holland commented on the project's potential cost, and Cllr Sibley was concerned

Minutes: BTC05/2425: Bicester Town Council
Monday 14th October 2024

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Signed

Dated

about the duplication of work with the Cherwell Local Plan, which is already taking place along with OCC plans.

Cllr Pruden supported the local neighbourhood plan, though urged costs should be determined first.

Cllr Mawer shared a referendum would need to take place, and there was no guarantee that after the local plan was created, it would not be overturned by the District Council, creating concerns for cost and uncertainty.

Cllr Ford expected a more detailed presentation, including the attendance of a planning officer from Cherwell.

Cllr Webb supported the plan but was concerned about how the neighbourhood plan committee would be formed and who they reported to.

Cllr Maguire shared he was in favour of the local plan.

Cllr Mallows supported the local plan and noted that it might take time and be challenging, but it should not stop us from doing it.

Cllr Beckett then summarised the motion by thanking the councillors for their contributions. Funding can be applied for during the early stages of the project. A well-formed neighbourhood plan using expert support could overcome the uncertainty of the plan failing. Residents and groups would engage the people of Bicester and allow them to have their say. The neighbourhood plan would be a democratic tool enabling the people of Bicester to decide Bicester's future.

RESOLVED the Council voted and **APPROVED** the motion.
In favour - 8, Against – 4 and Abstained – 3

36/ Appointment to Outside Body

2425 **RESOLVED** the Committee **APPROVED** the appointment of Cllr Wheatley as the Town Council representative for the Bicester Garden Town Strategic Oversight Committee.

37/ Mayors Report

2425 **RESOLVED** the Committee **NOTED** the Mayors report.

38/ Earmarked Reserves Report

2425 **RESOLVED** the Committee **APPROVED** the report.

Councillor Pruden thanked all BTC Officers and staff for their hard work over the last few months, Cllr Maguire also thanks those officers that are not here for one reason or another.

39/ Date of the next meeting

2425 Monday 13th January 2025 – 7pm

CLOSE OF MEETING: 19:58 hrs

FIN02/2425

Minutes of the Finance Committee

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Tuesday 9th July 2024 at 19:00hrs at The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester Oxon, OX26 6PS.

Present:

Cllr Alisa Russell (Chair)
Cllr Tom Beckett (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Donna Ford
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Sam Holland
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Paul Wheatley

In Attendance:

Helen Pool, Responsible Finance Officer
Jodi Clarke, Finance Assistant

22/2425 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies were received from the following Committee Members:

- Cllr Rachel Mallows
- Cllr Nick Cotter

23/2425 Declaration of Interest

RESOLVED that no declarations were received.

24/2425 Minutes of the Finance Committee

RESOLVED that the Committee APPROVED the following minutes:

- FIN01/2425 – Tuesday 4th June 2024 at 19:00hrs

25/2425 Public Session

RESOLVED that no public were present.

26/2425 Finance Report

RESOLVED that the Committee NOTED & REVIEWED the Income, Expenditure and Variances Report to Month 2.

A query was raised on whether ledger code 102/4210 (Civic & Democratic/Mayor's Fundraising Expenses) had budgeted funds – the Responsible Finance Officer explained that no budget is put to the code as the money spent for the mayor's events is offset by income received and recorded under 1013/102 code Inc Civic Miscellaneous which balances off the expenditure.

A query was raised as to why budget 106/4039 (Garth House/Waste Removal) was 145.2% overspent – the Responsible Finance Officer explained that this was due to an invoice received in March 2024 that should have been paid in the previous financial year.

Minutes: FIN02/2425: Finance Committee Meeting
Tuesday 9th July 2024

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Responsible Finance Officer is to investigate the following:

- **Expenditure 110/4314 (Projects/Town Centre)** £587.00 was spent on for budget and update Cllr Ford.
- Look into the position of the Lease with for Whitelands, and whether rent can be acquired from the Café.
- **Budget 308/1028 (Whitelands Sports Village/Inc Pavilion & Pitches)** was budgeted for £93k last year but no budget is presented for the current financial year.
- **Budget 308/101 (Whitelands Sports Village/Inc Whitelands Room Hire)** Bicester Town Council doesn't take bookings for the Function Room, but money is put against the budget.
- **Budget 308/1016 (Whitelands Sports Village/Inc Whitelands Café)** £4,500 budgeted but Bicester Town Council do not charge rent currently.
- To check that the budget for the current financial year has been uploaded.

27/2425 Bank Balances

RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED & REVIEWED** the bank balances at the end of **MAY 2024** and **NOTED** that Cllr Russell has signed the monthly bank reconciliation for the year to 31st May 2024.

A query was raised as the Bank Statement and Closing Balances did not match. The Responsible Finance Officer explained that the Bank – Cash and Investment Reconciliation Report was printed after 31st May and further transactions had been entered into the cashbook resulting in a difference between the bank and cashbook balances. Rialtas does not facilitate a specific date range so the Cash and Investment Balances reports will always show all current transactions on the date of printing. Going forward, where possible, until month end is completed, transactions will not be entered to prevent this from happening. The Responsible Finance Officer did have the Bank Reconciliations present to show the matching balances between the Cash Book and Bank Statements as of the 31st May 2024.

28/2425 Payments

RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** the payment schedules, totalling £171,645.64 for 28/05/2024 to 10/06/2024 for payments made since those agreed at the meeting on the 04/06/2024.

29/2425 Age Creditors

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

Another member raised a query about the position with the Rugby Club and the outstanding money. Cllr Wheatley explained that this was still an ongoing process, the club are unable to pay the invoice and are currently paying for 3G use per booking. The Town Clerk has sent them an offer and is awaiting a response.

30/2425 Aged Debtors

Concerns were raised with the overall position between the Rugby Club and the Council.

Town Clerk is to provide a report to update the Finance Committee with the current position regarding the rugby club, the following must be included:

- Amount proposed

Minutes: FIN02/2425: Finance Committee Meeting
Tuesday 9th July 2024

Signed:.....

Date:.....

- When emails/communication have been made
- Who has made communication.

Pitchbooking Debtors:

Cllr Ford requested confidential papers for the next meeting with all outstanding debt from Pitchbooking.com so that councillors can see what clubs/users are accruing debt.

While trying to recover the debt, officers are asked to complete the following:

- Send 3 emails with 'read' receipts: 1st, 2nd and 3rd reminders for payment.
- Save read receipts.
- Send any debt recovering letter by signed post.

The Council **RESOLVED** and **AGREED** that the finance officers are to collect all debt before 31st August 2024, any debt remaining will have their accounts put on stop until all debt is cleared. If the debt is still outstanding, then eventually debt recovery will be enforced to collect any outstanding monies owed. Ten working days have been given for the debt to be cleared before the accounts are turned onto a 'pay-as-you-go' option.

19:56 – Helen Pool left the meeting.

19:57 – Helen Pool returns to the meeting.

Officers are **REQUESTED** to look at the Booking Policy & Sports Rules and Regulation for any amendments/changes that may be needed considering the debt that has been found on the system. Officers are to take the policies to the Policy Committee for approval of changes.

31/2425 Bad Debt

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

A query was raised that the outstanding amount owing to us for OALC should have been deducted from the invoice paid for the OALC membership.

Officer is requested to take the OALC room hire debt to the next Full Council meeting on the 14th October 2024 as the debt is £208.33 and the Finance regulation section 9.4 states:

"Any sum found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts over £200 shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year. The RFO shall have the authority to write off debts below £200 subject to having taken appropriate steps to recover such debts."

32/2425 Fees and Charges

Community Sports Working Group are to discuss the price increase at their next meeting with a report to follow.

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

Minutes: FIN02/2425: Finance Committee Meeting
Tuesday 9th July 2024

Signed:.....

Date:.....

- i. Increase to sport pitch fees' by £1.00 per hour. The Committee asked the Sports Work Committee to complete an annual review of the fees.
- ii. Introduction of separate rate for UK State Pension Age for Whitelands 3G pitch, discounting the adult price by 25%. The Committee amended the wording to state UK State Pension.

33/2425 Direct Debit Mandate

RESOLVED that the Committee APPROVED the following direct debit mandates to be set up:

- i. HMRC Land Registry
- ii. O2 Telefonica

34/2425 OALC Budget

Councillors voted on the recommendation for approval.

1 Councillor abstained & 6 Councillors voted for the approval of the recommendation.

RESOLVED that the Committee APPROVED the decrease in the budget for 801/4083 (Street Scene/Pedestrian Scheme) and increase the budget for 105/4024 (Central Service/Subscriptions) by £5,000.

35/2425 Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED that the Committee DEFFERED the item to the following meeting on 24th September 2024 at 19:00hrs.

Further clarification is needed before a decision can be made. Councillors asked for the total costs of the Parks and Grounds contract, including employees for 2023/2024 and for 2024/2025.

36/2425 Grant Aid Applications

RESOLVED that the Committee APPROVED the following Grant Aid Applications with the following amendment to one:

- Churches in Bicester Refugee Support Group
- 3rd & 7th Bicester Brownies
- 1st Heyford Park Scout Group – AGREED that £250 be given as only 10 of their 40 members are from Bicester.

37/2425 Garth Park Play Area

RESOLVED that the Committee APPROVED the installation of a destination park with £440K to be funded from 901/9011 (Earmarked Reserves/Play Areas and Open Spaces)

38/2425 Whitelands Defibrillator Installation

RESOLVED that the Committee APPROVED that the funding totalling £2,100 for the Defibrillator is to be taken from 901/9020 (Earmarked Reserves/BTC Premises).

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RESOLVED that the Committee NOTED the report.

39/2425 Partitioning of Whitelands Function Room

RESOLVED that the Committee APPROVED the installation of a folding screen/door system in the Whitelands function room by **supplier A**.

RESOLVED that the Committee APPROVED that the funding £20,000 is to be taken from **901/9042 (Earmarked Reserves/Sports Village Contribution)**.

40/2425 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 24th September 2024 at 19:00hrs

CLOSE OF MEETING: 20:41hrs

Minutes of the Planning Committee

A meeting of the Planning Committee was held on Tuesday 3rd September at 19:00 hrs at The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS.

Present:

Cllr Nicholas Mawer – Chairman
Cllr Tom Beckett – Vice Chair
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Sam Holland
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Damien Maguire
Cllr Rachel Mallows
Cllr Chris Pruden
Cllr Jim Webb
Cllr John Willett

In Attendance:

Paul Canning – Office Manager
Maria Galic – Administrator

27/ Apologies for Absence

2425 RESOLVED that apologies for absence were received from Cllr Nick Cotter

28/ Declarations of Interest

2425 RESOLVED that declarations of interest were received from Cllr Tom Beckett in respect of application 24/02018/DISC 12 Almond Road, Cllr's Chris Pruden, John Willett, and Harry Knight in respect application 24/02088/TPO The Old Priory.

29/ Declarations of Interest for District & County Councillors

2425 RESOLVED that declarations of interest were received from Cllr Nick Mawer, Cllr Tom Beckett, Cllr Harry Knight, Cllr Chris Pruden, and Cllr John Willett as Cherwell District Councillors.

30/ Minutes of the Planning Meeting

2425 RESOLVED that MINUTES of the following Planning Committee Meeting were APPROVED:

- PL02/2425 – Tuesday 23rd July 2024

The Minutes now include the following written amendment, that Cllr Les Sibley substituted for Cllr Harry Knight and Cllr Paul Wheatley substituted for Cllr Chris Pruden.

31/ Public Session

2425 RESOLVED that no members of the public were present.

32/ Updates on large Developments and associated issues

2425 RESOLVED that an update was provided on Wretchwick Way that progress was being made. Puy du Fou, Upper Heyford and Siemens Healthineers were discussed. Work was starting on Bicester Motion for Yasa.

Minutes: PL03/2425: Planning Committee Meeting
Tuesday 3rd September 2024

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Signed

Dated

33/ Planning applications from Cherwell District Council

2425 RESOLVED that Committee CONSIDERED and COMMENTED on the following applications:

24/01311/F – 55 Montgomery Road, Launton

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01535/F – 13 Beckett Way, Graven Hill

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01552/F – 76 Mallards Way

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01743/F – The Burrows

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01756/TEL – Street Record, Old Skimmingdish Lane

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01777/DISC – Tesco Lakeview Drive

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01810/F – 60 Corncrake Way

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council have concerns over this application due to:

- Overdevelopment of the site
- Bulk and massing
- Parking

24/01813/DISC – Unit D1 Graven Hill

Bicester Town Council have concerns over this application made no comment on this application.

24/01815/DISC - Unit D1 Graven Hill

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01817/F – 38 Shearwater Drive

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01829/F – 71 Lyneham Road

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01843/F – Land Adj to 53 & 54 Hambleside

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01868/F – 12 Lily Close

RESOLVED Bicester Town Council have concerns over this application due to:

- Out of keeping with the street scene
- Overlooking neighbour's properties
- Parking availability for additional residents

24/01876/F – 4 Sycamore Gardens

RESOLVED Bicester Town Council have no objection on this application.

24/01894/DISC – Axis J9 Phase 3 Howes Lane

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01895/DISC – Axis J9 Phase 3 Howes Lane

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01896/DISC – Axis J9 Phase 3 Howes Lane

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01897/DISC – Axis J9 Phase 3 Howes Lane

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01921/F – 111 Buckingham Road

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council **STRONGLY OBJECT** to this application and resubmit previous comments:

- Highway concerns
- Inadequate bin storage
- Overcrowding and lack of habitable space
- Quality of the building is sub-standard

24/01924/REM – 0S Parcel 3489 Adj & SW of B4011, Allectus Avenue

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01927/F – Bicester Avenue Garden Centre

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01933/DISC – Bicester East Community Centre

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01954/DISC – Axis J9 Phase 3 Howes Lane

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01966/F – Austin House Chapel Drive

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01971/F – 95 Isis Avenue

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01983/DISC – Parcel R Bishops Road

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01984/DISC - Parcel R Bishops Road

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01985/F – 38 Shearwater Drive

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/02003/NMA – 122 Anniversary Avenue East

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/02018/DISC – Brecon House 12 Almond Road

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/02020/CLUE – 4 Sandpiper Close

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/02054/NMA – St Edburgs CofE Primary School

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council WELCOME this application.

24/02058/F – Land to North of Anniversary Avenue

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council welcome the provision of extra care homes in this area. However, endorse the objection and the concerns raised in Knight's letter recorded in the CDC planning portal

24/02088/TPO – The Old Priory, Priory Lane

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council leave this application to the Arboriculturist Officer.

24/02101/TPO – 4 Tinkers Lane

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council leave this application to the Arboriculturist Officer.

24/02190/F – Car Park, Holm Square

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council is generally supportive of the provision of EV Charging points, however, have concerns over this application due to:

- Repositioning of disabled parking spots
- Impact on school run parking
- Availability of parking in a limited area

24/02202/F – Chestnut Barn Whitelands Farm

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/02287/TEL – Vodafone Tel Mast 80559

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/00542/F – Land Adj to No 1 St Peters Crescent

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council OBJECT this application due to it being out of keeping with the street scene.

- An over development of the property
- The parking provision being dangerous

24/00620/F – 7 Launton Road

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council OBJECT this application due to it being out of keeping with the street scene:

- An over development of the property
- The parking provision being dangerous

23/01496/DISC – Proposed Himley Village North West Bicester

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

23/01586/REM – Proposed Himley Village North West Bicester

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

24/01192/F – 2 Morello Close

RESOLVED that Bicester Town Council made no comment on this application.

34/ Appeals
2425 RESOLVED that Committee NOTED the Appeals.

35/ Amended Plan
2425 RESOLVED that Committee NOTED the Amended Plans.

36/ Notification of planning decisions from Cherwell District Council
2425 RESOLVED that Committee NOTED the planning decisions.

37/ Forward Plan
2425 RESOLVED that Committee NOTED the Forward Plan.

Councillors stated that the London Road Level Crossing had been mentioned in Parliament on this date.

Cllrs Jim Webb and Rachel Mallows sent their apologies for the next meeting on 01/10/2024. Cllr Damien Maguire sent apologies for the meeting on 19/11/2024.

38/ Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 1st October at 7pm, The Chamber Room, Garth
2425 House

CLOSE OF MEETING: 20:02 hrs

Minutes of the Policy Committee

A meeting of the Policy Committee was held on Tuesday 18th June 2024 at 19:00hrs at The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester Oxon, OX26 6PS.

Present:

Cllr Paul Wheatley (Chair)
Cllr Tom Beckett
Cllr Sam Holland
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Nick Mawer
Cllr Alisa Russell
Cllr Les Sibley (Substitute)

In Attendance:

Phil Evans, Town Clerk
Jodi Clarke, Finance Assistant
John Burnett, Service Manager
Trevor Morley, Setfords

1/2425 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies were received from the following Committee Members:

- Cllr Rachel Mallows
- Cllr Nick Cotter
- Cllr Jim Webb – Cllr Les Sibley has been sent as a substitute

2/2425 Declaration of Interest

RESOLVED that no declarations were received.

Cllr Wheatley REQUESTED that the following items to be added to the next agenda:

- Minutes from POL06/2425 meeting held on 22nd April 2024 at 19:00hrs
- Appointment of Vice-Chair
- Forward Plan

3/2425 Public Session

RESOLVED that no public were present.

4/2425 Tender Presentation

The Town Clerk explained the process that will take place during the Tendering Process and gave them the following information about each tender:

- New tenders do not have tree works included in the contract, but both have assured the Town Clerk that they can do the work at an additional cost.

Trevor Morely from Setfords has been asked to attend the meeting in case any legal advice is needed.

19:11 Cllr Beckett left the meeting.

RESOLVED that a presentation was given by Tender 1.

Councillors asked the Tender the following questions:

Q: Can council staff have access to the same system that yourselves use?

A: Yes, full access. Councillors can also raise task and get updates.

Q: Do you pay a living wage or a minimum wage?

A: We pay a living wage to our employees.

Q: If grass is cut when its wet and it's bent rather than cut do we raise this with you?

A: Yes and no, you can raise it to us in the app as an insufficient cut.

Q: Can we see every tree, shrub, grass area etc. through the map?

A: GSI layout all features in the contract.

An example of the map was presented to the Councillors.

Q: The Nature Reserve in Bure Park, if we wanted to extend to include this is it an extension of the contract?

A: Yes, it would be.

Q: What are the financial costs for the 2024 contract as we have only been presented 2024?

A: Many apologies I can confirm the amount in the 2023 header is correct, we haven't changed the header.

Q: Staff shortages, what is your plan?

A: We have resource teams that can move areas. Long term sick would be replaced & other staff would do overtime to fulfil the needs of the contract.

Q: Do they have Welfare Facilities?

A: They use public toilets, areas that they know they are accepted in and can use if needed.

Q: Do you have anything in place for Lone Working?

A: We have a policy on lone working, this contract has no lone workers lined up. All staff have spy guards which they can press if help is needed, they all have mobile phones.

The Councillors thanked the Tender for their time.

19:57 Tender 1 left the meeting.

19:59 Trevor Morley and Cllr Knight left the Meeting

20:00 Cllr Russell left the meeting.

20:01 Cllr Russell, Cllr Knight & Trevor Morley returned to the meeting.

RESOLVED that a presentation was given by Tender 2.

Councillors asked the Tender the following questions:

Minutes: POL01/2425: Policy Committee Meeting

Tuesday 18th June 2024

Signed:..... Date:.....

Q: How many staff members?

A: 18 staff members in reading.

Q: The unit in Heyford, is this part of the contingency plan for this contract?

A: Yes, we have reserved the space for if we get the contract.

Q: Would the Town Clerk be able to contact you if needed?

A: Yes, if the operation Manager is not fulfilling their duties, then both Henry and I are contactable at any time.

Q: Staff Shortages, what is your plan?

A: Bicester Team will be based in Bicester only. We have mobile teams to come in if it is needed but also the managers will assist if needed.

Q: Do you have provisions for breaks etc?

A: The staff know they are to take breaks every 2 hours; we push the team to take breaks little and often due to the machinery they work with.

Q: Do you have anything in place for Lone Working?

A: We have a policy in place for lone working, but we tend to send workers out in pairs rather than by themselves.

Q: Do you pay the living wage or Minimum wage?

A: Minimum Wage.

Q: How did you get guys into what you do?

A: Started as a ground's operative on a ground's maintenance contract but due to the unpleasant work setting, we both decided to leave and was mowing one ladies garden for £25 from there it has grown.

Q: Do staff fluctuate seasonally?

A: No, they are full time staff that are paid 40hrs per week but will work 45hrs in the summer & 30hrs in the winter.

Q: Do you offer apprenticeships?

A: We do but it is hit & miss. Some customers don't like the risk, if you were happy for this to be apart of the contract then it's something we can look at.

Councillors thanked the second tender for their time.

20:36 Tener 2 left the meeting.

5/2425 Cemetery

RESOLVED that a verbal update was given.

The Town Clerk informed the committee that they had walked the cemetery with Peter Mitchell who was able to identify some space for Cremation plots to which the Service Manager is currently working on.

20:40 Cllr Sibley left the meeting.

Minutes: POL01/2425: Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday 18th June 2024

Signed:..... Date:.....

The Town Clerk explained detailed timeframes.

The Town Clerk is trying all they can to ascertain land as quickly as possible whilst working with Cherwell District Council to reach the same goal.

20:42 Cllr Sibley Returned to the meeting.

The Committee discussed what the financial impact would be for every option.

20:53 Cllr Wheatley adjourned the meeting for a 5-minute break.

20:58 Cllr Wheatley resumed the meeting.

6/2425 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 publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

7/2425 Tender Selection

RESOLVED that councillor discussed the presentation under item 4.

8/2425 Lease Alteration request

RESOLVED that the council AGREED the following:

- The Council would not approve the signage on the entrance to Garth Park.
- The tenants must seek planning permission to any alternate signage plan that you wish to produce.
- Once planning permission has been granted (or you have a letter saying permission is not needed) the Council will agree to the new signage.

9/2425 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 16th September 2024 at 19:00hrs

Minutes of the Policy Committee

A meeting of the Policy Committee was held on **Monday 16th September 2024** at **19:00hrs** at **The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester Oxon, OX26 6PS.**

Present:

Cllr Paul Wheatley (Chair)
Cllr Tom Beckett
Cllr Sam Holland
Cllr Nick Mawer
Cllr Alisa Russell
Cllr Jim Webb

In Attendance:

Paul Canning, Deputy Town Clerk
Jodi Clarke, Finance Assistant
Brian Walters, Resident of Bicester

10/2425 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies were received from the following Committee Members:

- Cllr Rachel Mallows
- Cllr Nick Cotter
- Cllr Harry Knight

11/2425 Declaration of Interest

RESOLVED that a declaration of interest was received from Cllr Jim Web as he personally knows the outsourced HR support.

12/2425 Public Session

RESOLVED that Brian Walters attended the meeting to show his support for the proposed motion raised by Cllr Beckett. Mr Walters expressed to the Committee how the urgency & prompt action needed to make a positive contribution to the climate change. Mr Walters also expressed that it had been 5 years since the previous recommendation was approved.

13/2425 Policies for Review

RESOLVED that the following Policies were REVIEWED and APPROVED:

- GP11 – Complaints Policy
- GP24 – Tree Management Policy

Cllr Mawer expressed that the council hasn't been replacing trees as they should do in line with section 6.2 of GP24 – Tree Management Policy which states:

"It is important to ensure that for every tree felled, at least one tree is planted in its place and is properly cared for. The size and scale of the replacement planting should reflect both the trees removed and the situation."

14/2425 Motion – Emergency Climate Change

RESOLVED that Cllr Beckett presented his motion on the emergency climate change to the councillors and expressed the importance of following through with the recommendation that came from the Emergency Climate Change back in September 2019.

Cllr Beckett informed the councillors that the points 1, 3, 4 & 7 of the recommendation have not been actioned, these points are:

- i. Declare a Climate Emergency and work to becoming a carbon neutral organization by 2030, to include scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.
- iii. Task the Policy Committee to investigate the creation of a grant pot to encourage and enable carbon reduction schemes within Bicester for the year 2020-21. The primary criterion for applications should be CO2 savings per pound spent.
- iv. Where possible, include environmental implications of recommendations in officer reports alongside legal, financial and equality implications. These will include the impact of recommendations on CO2 emissions as well as any other environmental factors.
- vii. Seek ways to facilitate and encourage our community in reducing direct and indirect CO2 emissions and to become resilient to changes caused by changing climate. We will take active steps where possible to encourage:
 - o More sustainable transport.
 - o Reductions in energy use in homes, businesses and elsewhere.
 - o Co-operation with organizations seeking to develop low carbon and community led affordable housing in Bicester.
 - o Use and development of renewable energy sources.
 - o Production, sale and consumption of locally sourced food.
 - o Any other methods of achieving the aims above.

Cllr Beckett expressed that the costs need to be identified & budgeted for the following year but gave a rough estimate of £5,000 - £10,000.

Cllr Beckett explained the difference between the 3 scopes:

Scope 1 – Direct emissions from owned or controlled sources.

Scope 2 – Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy.

Scope 3 – All other indirect emissions in a company's value chain.

Cllr Mawer asked for clarification on whether this would be a standing report or placed onto the forward plan as the motion is not clear. Concerns were raised about bringing a consultant in to tell the council something they already know.

Cllr Beckett informed the group that these were alterations made as per the Town Clerks request, the motion reads as if it's a standing report but is to be put onto the forward plan until a time comes that a report can be presented to the committee.

Minutes: POL02/2425: Policy Committee Meeting
Monday 16th September 2024

Signed:..... Date:.....

Cllr Holland expressed his concern for staff as due to staff resources they may not have the capacity.

Due to staff shortages and the work that is going to be required to collate the information for budget creation the Chair asked the Deputy Town Clerk whether the staff had the capacity to take on the extra project at this time. The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Chair that it would put pressure on the staff at this current time.

RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED** and **COMMENTED** the motion.

The Chair requested that the motion be brought back to the Policy Committee on the 8th October with the recommendation to approve the motion.

Cllr Mawer & Cllr Webb seconded the proposal made by the Chair.

15/2425 Forward Plan

RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED** the Forward Plan.

The Chair informed the group of the findings from the Town Centre Group.

The Chair also added that the council have Rules & Regulation for the Sports that takes place at Council owned sites.

It was **AGREED** that a section needs to be added to the Policy page on the website that re-directs them to the open spaces page for the Rules & Regulations.

Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 8th October 2024 at 19:00hrs

CLOSE OF MEETING: 20:03hrs

Minutes of the Policy Committee

A meeting of the Policy Committee was held on Tuesday 8th October 2024 at 19:00hrs at The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester Oxon, OX26 6PS.

Present:

Cllr Paul Wheatley (Chair)
Cllr Tom Beckett
Cllr Dan Hallett (Substitute)
Cllr Sam Holland
Cllr Rachel Mallows
Cllr Nick Mawer
Cllr Alisa Russell
Cllr Jim Webb

In Attendance:

Phil Evans, Town Clerk (Via Teams)
Jodi Clarke, Finance Assistant
Brian Walters, Resident of Bicester
John & Pam Roberts, Residents of Bicester

16/2425 Appoint Vice-Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr Wheatley proposed Cllr Russell be appointed to Vice-Chair, Seconded by Cllr Mallows.

2 councillors abstained & 5 councillors voted for Cllr Russell to be appointed.

RESOLVED that the Committee APPOINTED Cllr Russell as Vice-Chair to the Policy Committee.

17/2425 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies were received from the following Committee Members with substitutions:

- Cllr Nick Cotter
- Cllr Harry Knight sent Cllr Dan Hallett to substitute but will be arriving late.

18/2425 Declaration of Interest

RESOLVED that no declarations were received.

19/2425 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the Committee APPROVED the minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on with the following amendments:

- POL02/2425 – Monday 16th September 2024 at 19:00hrs
Change Brian Walters to Brain Walters

20/2425 Public Session

RESOLVED that Brian Walters, Pam Roberts & John Roberts attended the meeting to show their support for the proposed motion raised by Cllr Beckett. Mr

Welters expressed to the Committee how the urgency & prompt action needed to make a positive contribution to the climate change, he informed the councillors that since 1975 the CO2 Emissions have doubled echoing the importance of the motion.

19:05hrs Cllr Hallett arrived at the meeting.

Pam Roberts expressed the fantastic work that Bicester Town Council has done in regard to the wildlife areas around Bicester when Cherwell District Council wanted to build on the land, she expressed that if the council then went forward with the motion, it would benefit all parties further. Communication between residents and the council on these matters could be better.

Cllr Beckett has set up Sustainability Meetings in St Edburg's church for residents to attend and discuss environmental factors within Bicester.

21/2425 Sports Rules & Regulations

RESOLVED that the Sports Rules & Regulations were REVIEWED, COMMENTED and APPROVED the following amendments:

- Bullet points changed to numbers
- Removal of the note at the bottom of the Rules & Regulations
- Cllr Wheatley proposed that the following section be added to the third bullet point to which Cllr Mawer seconded. – "The council may, at its absolute discretion, refuse to accept a booking."
- Correction of a spelling mistake in bullet point 7
- A section to be added stating "Home teams should ensure that all relevant parties have received training for erecting the goals."

Cllr Mawer who attended the Community Sports Working Group on the 26th September informed the Committee that there were a few things mentioned by the clubs:

- Whether the Astro pitch is a 3G or a 4G pitch as the footwear requirements are completely different.

The Town Clerk was able to inform the group that the pitch is a 3G Astro pitch, the difference between the 4G & 3G is that a 3G pitch is Astro crumb & a 4G pitch has layers & insulation. The footwear requirement for the two are different but confirmation has been given by Liam Didcock from Cherwell District Council that Whitelands do have a 3G Astro Pitch.

- Junior team raised concerns about goals after damage was caused to one of the sites goal sockets.

Cllr Mallows proposed that we create a video that is put onto the website for teams to watch prior to their matches to ensure goals are being used correctly. The councillors AGREED that a training video would be made available on the website for all users to watch.

Minutes: POL03/2425: Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday 8th October 2024

Signed:..... Date:.....

22/2425 Ground & Building Maintenance

RESOLVED that the committee APPROVED the sealing of this contract with the following witnesses:

- Cllr Wheatley
- Cllr Holland

23/2425 Ground & Building Maintenance (Sub-Contract)

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that this contract is for retained service such as; the planters in Sheep Street & Verge maintenance. The Clerk also informed the group that there is a clause that states if Oxfordshire County Council pull the plug on the funding, then the Town Council will end up taking on the extra charge. The Clerk proposed that Cherwell District Council protect the council, but this was not accepted.

Cllr Wheatley proposed that this contract be rejected, Cllr Russell seconded, and a unanimous vote was made.

RESOLVED that the committee REJECTED the sealing of this contract.

Cllr Mallows proposed a vote of thanks for the Town Clerk and all the work he has done to bring this forward, Cllr Wheatley seconded, and a unanimous vote was made.

24/2425 Motion – Emergency Climate Change

RESOLVED that the Motion was DEFFERED to the following meeting as the recommendation should read:

- *"The Committee are asked to APPROVE the motion"*

Cllr Beckett thanked the public for attending and apologised that the administration cannot complete a simple task.

25/2425 Forward Plan

RESOLVED that the Committee NOTED the Forward Plan.

The Chair informed the group of the findings from the groups/meetings he had attended since the previous meeting.

Cllr Mawer thanked the chair for the updates given.

The Chair REQUESTED that the sports rules & regulation be removed from the forward plan, but the personnel policies would remain on the report until the Personnel – Sub Committee start reviewing them.

Date of the next meeting

Monday 11th November 2024 at 19:00hrs

CLOSE OF MEETING: 19:55hrs

Minutes: POL03/2425: Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday 8th October 2024

Signed:..... Date:.....

BTAG02/2425

Minutes of the Bicester Traffic Advisory Group

A meeting of the Bicester Traffic Advisory Group was held on Thursday 19th September 2024 at 14:00 hrs at the Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS.

Present:

Cllr Michael Waine (Chair)
 Cllr Donna Ford
 Cllr Paul Wheatley (Substitute for Cllr John Willett)
 Cllr Sam Holland
 Cllr Chris Pruden (CDC)
 Cllr Les Sibley (OCC)
 Jacqui Cox (OCC)
 Owen Bentley (OCC)
 Gargi Holland (OCC)
 Anthony Kirkwood (OCC)

In Attendance:

Officer, Paul Canning
 Civic & Democratic Administrator, Maria Galic

11/ Apologies for Absence

2425 RESOLVED that APOLOGIES were received from Cllr John Willett, Michael Hewitt (CDC), Chris Hulme (TVP) and Miranda Markham (DL – Bicester Vision).
 Committee commented that TVP presence is vital to these meetings.
 Committee requested that there is a requirement for clear terms of reference.

12/ Minutes of the Bicester Traffic Advisory Group

2425 RESOLVED that Committee APPROVED the Minutes of the Traffic Advisory Group meeting:

- BTAG01/2425 – Thursday 13th June 2024

13/ Update of items outstanding not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

2425 RESOLVED the Committee UPDATED on:

- Congestion issues in Bicester, including road works creating traffic issues: Manorsfield Road, Causeway, A41, M40 Ardley Junction. Committee requested:
 - Jacqui Cox to contact a representative to present a plan of all works going on in and around Bicester
 - A clear picture of works being carried out, e.g. Causeway closure was a result of electric works
 - The improvement of communication between contractors and highways
- Pathway by Esso garage – Councillors urge for a temporary measure here due to difficulty crossing

Minutes: BTAG02/2425: Bicester Traffic Advisory Group Meeting
 Thursday 19th September 2024

Page 1 of 3

Signed

Dated

**14/ 2425 Presentation from Oxfordshire County Council
Owen Bentley Project Manager Active Travel Delivery Team**

Updates were received on:

- London Road:
 - funding to improve walking to Graven Hill
 - possible public consultation in Nov 2024
- Rodney House to Talisman roundabout:
 - possible 30mph speed limit
- 20mph
 - Extend to Talisman roundabout
 - Councillors raised questions regarding:
 - If the carriage way is wide enough
 - If the pavement is wide enough for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Numbers of pedestrians and cyclists using this route
- London Road
 - Councillors suggest for ban of HGVs

Councillors request to be updated and informed of plans, in particular those councillors local to the area.

15/ 2425 Update on 20mph Limits by Anthony Kirkwood – Vision Zero Team

Speed limit maps were discussed by the Committee.

- OCC updated on areas that will remain at 30mph and new 20mph limits that will come into place.
- Councillors expressed their concerns over these new limits along bus routes
- Concerns raised over a 20mph limit not altering driving behaviour

16/ 2425 Temporary Traffic Regulation Order

- The Temporary Traffic Order on the Causeway was discussed
- Councillors requested for an Officer to discuss this in a Town Council Meeting

17/ 2425 Weight Restriction Order on London Road = Launton Road (up to Londis Garage)

Committee have requested that OCC provide an update on this at the next meeting. Councillors expressed concerns over:

- Single width of pavement
- A growing number of HGV's accessing the London Road, Launton Road and Town Centre

18/ Forward Plan

2425 RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED** and **COMMENTED** on the Forward Plan

- Update on A495 realignment design elements in progress. Funding is ready to

Minutes: BTAG02/2425: Bicester Traffic Advisory Group Meeting
Thursday 19th September 2024

Page 2 of 3

Signed

Dated

commence a detailed design.

- Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership was discussed

**19/
2425 Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 9th January 2025 at 2pm, The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council

Close of meeting: 15:23hrs.



BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: 01869 252915 damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: ALL

Budget Setting for 2025/2026

1. Overview

To give the Committee the opportunity to review the draft budget for the financial year 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 before the full council approves the budget and agrees a precept.

Detailed budget Figures are provided in Appendix 1 – this was created from the Detailed Income and Expenditure Report to 30/09/2024 from Rialtas. The following columns were added:

Draft Budget 25/26 – The Town Clerk's draft budget with alterations to figures highlighted in yellow and red.

Total estimated expenditure for 24/25 – RFO's estimated figures subject to accruals at year end and further expenditure during the year.

Actuals for the previous 5 years and two years future predictions.

2. Alterations since the Environment and Policy Committee meetings:

The presented budget at the Environment Committee Meeting and the Policy Committee Meeting was deferred in the last Finance Committee meeting on Wednesday, 4th December 2024.

It contained the alterations made to the following ledger codes considering new information regarding NI increases and predicted growth in Band D households and the amounts are highlighted in yellow:

Ledger Code:	Original Budget figure	Altered figure
108/1076 Precept	£1,836,242.76	£1,872,967.62
105/4001 Central NI	£32,500	£33,973.70
300/4001 Environment NI	£30,750	£33,494.52
308/4001 Whitelands NI	£15,375	£20,297.28
110/4313 Play Area	£51,648.16	£79,232.52

Further alterations have now been suggested in budget meeting held on the 20th December 2024 after taking into account queries raised from the Finance Committee meeting held on the 4th December 2024 and are in red.

Ledger Code:	Original Budget figure	Altered figure
108/1096 Inc – Interest rec.	£65,000	£85,000
110/4301 Garth House	£17,500	£5000
110/4313 Play Area	£79,232.52	£51,732.52
301/4190 Parks and Gardens	£400,000	£460,000

3. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to **NOTE** the contents of this report and the 2025/2026 budget as set out in Appendix 2/3

The Committee is asked to refer to agenda item 11.2 and conclude the proposed motion

The Committee is asked to **APPROVE** the budget for the year 2025/2026.



BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: 01869 252915 damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: ALL

Precept Breakdown

1. Overview

To give the Committee the opportunity to review the precept for 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 before the full council approves the budget and agrees a precept. We have applied a 2.3% increase to the amount that Bicester Residents pay.

2. Background

Bicester Town Council is obliged to set a balanced budget and to agree a precept annually. This report covers the Financial Year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The precept is the amount of money that is collected on the council's behalf from the council taxpayers in the town area. The precept is expressed as a total cash sum and as an amount per Band D household.

3. Tax Base

Cherwell District Council (CDC) calculates the tax base figure for the district and for each town or parish within the district – the tax base figure is expressed as an averaged number Band D households.

The Draft Tax Base Band D increase from last year to this year has been issued.

Estimated 2025/2026 = 13,439.40

Broadly speaking, the tax base figure increases in line with the number of homes in the town.

The precept is calculated by dividing the total precept sum by the tax base. For Bicester Town Council, the estimated tax base figure for 2025/26 is 13,439.40 being a small increase on the 2024/25 figure of 13,219.40.

Below is an excerpt from the draft figures report:

DRAFT TAX BASE BY PARISH 2025-26 - TO BE APPROVED BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON 6 JANUARY 2025				
PARISH	TAX BASE 2025-26	TAX BASE 2024-25	Movement	%
BICESTER	13,439.4	13,219.4	220.0	1.7%

4. Council Tax Calculations

Precept request per year		Amount
2025/2026		£1,872,967.62
2024/2025		£1,800,238.00
Tax Base per year		Band D Equivalent Properties
2025/2026		13,439.4
2024/2025		13,219.4

Draft estimated Council tax bill for a Band D property:

Year 2025/2026: $\text{£1,872,967.62} / 13,439.4 = \text{£139.36}$

Year 2024/2025: $\text{£1,800,238.00} / 13,219.4 = \text{£136.18}$

An estimated 2.3% increase will show on the bill of each resident at Band D, it increases from £136.18 (2024/25) to £139.36 (2025/26):

$$\text{£139.36} - \text{£136.18} = \text{£3.18}$$

$$\text{£3.18} / \text{£136.18} \times 100 = 2.3\%$$

5. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** the precept with the understanding that the precept is subject to change once the Band D numbers are confirmed by Cherwell District Council and will ask the Full Council to **APPROVE** the precept and the amount of the precept of £1,872,967.62.



BICESTER
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BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: 01869 252915 damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: ALL

Alternative Budget Motion

1. Overview

Standing Order 2.0 allows councillors to raise a motion supported by a Councillor that's seconds the motion (in this case seconded by Councillor Nick Mawer)

The Motion to propose an Alternative budget has been made by Councillor Ford.

Full Detail found in **APPENDIX 3**



BICESTER
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BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: 01869 252915 damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: ALL

Outdoor Restroom

1. Overview

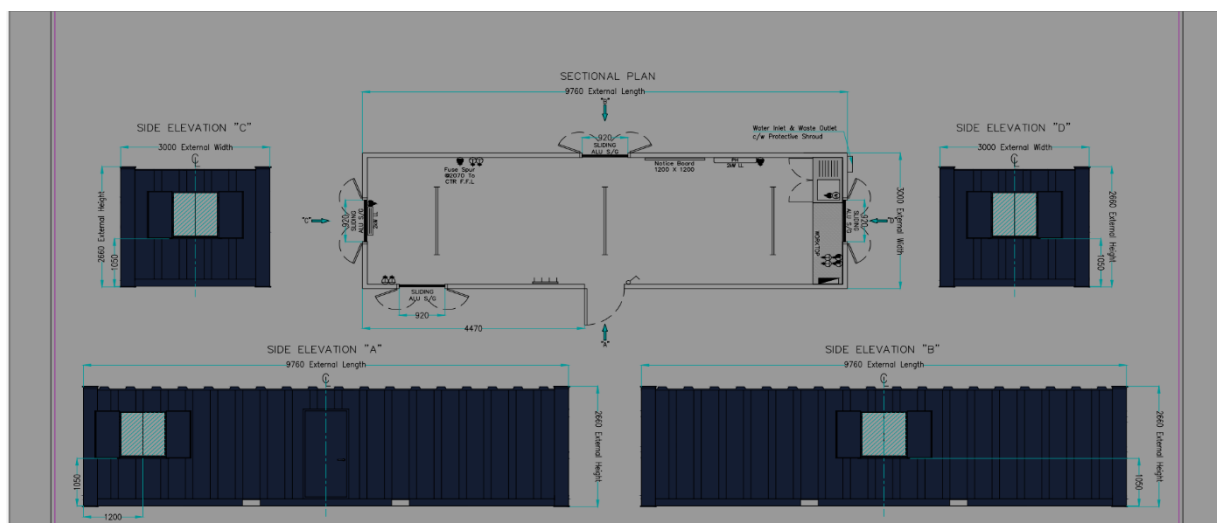
1.1. Currently the outdoor team are based in the stables yard. The current restroom facilities are now out of date, open to the elements and do not allow for a drying room, proper toilet facilities or kitchen.

2. Proposal

2.1. The existing condemned portacabin is removed from Claytons yard with electricity and water and drains disconnected.

2.2. A new anti-vandal portacabin is installed with restroom facilities, toilet and drying room.





2.3. Quotes below include delivery and installation from Supplier A.

Supplier A - £18,000 excluding VAT

Supplier A was approved by the Environment committee on the 18th November

2.4. **Service and Infrastructure** - Cut off and re-connect mains electricity, water, drainage, install CCTV and new chairs and tables - **£8,500**

3. Recommendation

The Council is asked to **APPROVE** Supplier A , in line with the finance regulations , supporting the approval already given by the Environment and Finance Committee.



BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: 01869 252915 damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: ALL

Asset Disposal

1. Overview

The RFO is required to ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets is maintained.

2. Background

According to Financial Regulations:

14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, or relevant committee together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item or tangible movable property does not exceed £1000.

3. Obsolete Items

List below is a table illustrating obsolete items that will be removed from our Asset Register as they are beyond repair.

ASSET NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	AQUISITION	EST REPLACEMENT	AGE	EXPECTED LIFE	BOUGHT FOR	EXP DEPRECIATION YEARLY	Value lost
00004	POLE ATTACHMENT	01/01/2012	30/12/2016	12	5	£200	£40	-£480
00018	HEDGE CUTTER ATTACHEMNT	01/01/2016	30/12/2020	8	5	£250	£50	-£400
00022	Combi Engine	01/01/2017	31/12/2021	7	5	£490	£90	-£630
00029	Lawn Mower	01/01/2012	31/12/2014	12	2	£1,150	£200	£2,400
00030	Lawn Mower	01/01/2012	31/12/2014	12	2	£1,150	£200	£2,400
00034	Strimmer					£100		
00041	Lawn Mower	01/01/2016	30/12/2020	8	5	£900	£160	-£1,280
00045	Lawn Mower	01/01/2005	31/12/2014	19	10	£50	£5.00	-£95
00047	Lawn Mower	01/01/2017	31/12/2021	7	5	£370	£60	-£420
00051	Lawn Mower	01/01/2017	31/12/2021	7	5	£224	£40	-£280
00087	Sprayer	26/06/1905		119				
00088	Leaf Vac	01/05/2005		19	4			
10008	John Deere	01/01/2016	30/12/2022	8	7	£2,800	£300	-£2,400
10011	Tractor	06/05/2008	04/05/2018	16	10	£24,655	£2,250	-£36,000

4. Recommendation

The Council is asked to **APPROVE** the removal of the above asses , in line with the finance regulations , supporting the approval already given by the Environment and Finance Committee.- Officers will try to sell the listed equipment as spare and repairs.



BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: 01869 252915 damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: ALL

Earmarked reserve spend

1. Overview

Cherwell District Council sent a late quarterly invoice for landscape recharges due from last year.

2. Background

- i. The amount of £132,765.93 (exc.VAT) from CDC pertains to part of the green infrastructure and is from the last finance year budget 301/4190 Parks and Garden Contract. Ledger 4190 was overspent at the end of 2024/25 so it was requested that it be taken from Earmarked Reserves 901/9014 Green Infrastructure.
- ii. Councillors asked the RFO to take advice from the Internal Auditor as to whether this should be a revenue expenditure or taken from Earmarked Reserves. The advice given was: 'So long as an earmarked reserve legitimately exists for this type of expenditure then the reserve can be used for that purpose.'

In terms of in year reporting though – the items will still fall to be reported as current year expenses and will be reportable in box 6 of the AGAR as such. The expenses can't be posted directly to reserves.'

3. Proposal

- i. Pay for the invoice out of 301/4190 Parks and Garden Contract demonstrating the current year expenditure as the accrued invoice amount had not been set aside in the Earmarked Reserves.
- ii. Pay for the invoice of £132,765.93 (exc. VAT) out of 901/9014 from Earmarked Reserves 901/9014 Green Infrastructure.

4. Recommendation

The Council is asked to **APPROVE** the above spend from earmarked reserves , in line with the finance regulations , supporting the approval already given by the Finance Committee.



BICESTER
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BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: 01869 252915 damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: ALL

Interim Audit

1. Overview

The Council has received the first interim audit for 2024/2025.

The Internal Auditor, Mulberry & Co conducted a remote audit commencing on the 28th November 2024. Recommendations for actions required are shown in bold text in the Interim Audit report and is attached as Appendix 2.

2. Recommendations for actions by the Auditor:

Actions required to be addressed, have been listed below with explanations of requirements.

- iii. A. Books of Account (page 3 of the report)
In account 4160 CC 102 Civic Expenses there were 10 sales invoices posted to this expense code. These need to be removed to an income code as income and expenditure must not be netted off.

Action taken: The RFO has now journalled the sales invoices to the correct ledger code.
- iv. B. Financial regulations, governance and payments (page 5)
The council is reminded that it is a legal requirement of the Freedom of Information Act to publish draft minutes within 20 working days of each meeting.
 - Town council – last set 20/05/2024
 - Environment – last set 19/03/2024
 - Finance committee - last set 26/03/2024
 - Planning – Last set 16/04/2024
 - Policy – last set 22/04/2024

Action taken: All dated minutes require publication as soon as possible; Town Clerk has been notified, the task will be addressed by the new Events and Marketing Administrator.

v. C. Risk Management and Insurance

The wording of the minute approving the precept must be sufficiently clear to show beyond reasonable doubt that council approved the precept and the level of that precept as it is not clear from the minutes what has been requested.

Action taken: The RFO has inserted the following wording in the Finance Committee Budget Report for 2025/2026 that will be recommended to the Full Council:

*'The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** the precept with the understanding that the precept is subject to change once the Band D numbers are confirmed by Cherwell District Council and will ask the Full Council to **APPROVE** the precept and the amount of the precept of £1,872,967.62.'*

vi. G. Payroll

The auditor was unable to verify the PAYE payments to the government gateway account.

Action taken: The RFO has raised the enquiry with the Town Clerk and contacted our payroll provider to investigate if this is something they hold as they complete PAYE payments on our behalf. Should an account not be held, the RFO will apply for one.

vii. J. Year End Accounts

The council, at its meeting to sign off the year-end accounts, must discuss Section 2 of the AGAR (Annual Governance Statement) and record this activity in the minutes of the meeting. Council is reminded that this must be a separate agenda item prior to the signing of Section 2 of the Agar (Annual Accounts)

The following were the minutes from our year end Full Council meeting held on the Monday 24th June 2024:

19/2425 Annual Governance Statement (AGAR Section 1) Report

The Full Council **NOTED** the accompanying documents and **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** the contents of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024

20/2425 Annual Governance Statement (AGAR Pt 2) Report

The Full Council thanked the Officers for their work with the Internal Audit and year end reports.

The Full Council **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** the contents of the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR Pt 2).

Action taken: Although we had two separate agenda items for Section 1 and Section 2, there was no recording of the discussions that took place when reviewing Section 2 of the AGAR. Further evidence of what was considered needed to have been

recorded. In the next year's meeting when the 24/25 AGAR is discussed, greater detail is required and needs to be recorded in the minutes.

3. Recommendation

Councillors are asked to **NOTE** the information.



BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: 01869 252915 damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: ALL

Independence and Competence of the internal Auditor

1. Overview

19. The purpose of this report is to:

- **confirm the current appointment of the internal auditor;**
- **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 2024.

The guide says the following about Independence (paras 4.9-4.11):

- "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. Full Council agreed to the appointment of Mulberry & Co for 2024/25 & 2025/26 (in addition to 2023/24) in the meeting BTC05/2324.

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.

4. Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to **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' Guidance published by NALC and to make recommendations to Full Council confirming the current appointment of the internal auditor.



BICESTER
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BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: 01869 252915 damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: ALL

Notice of Conclusion of Audit and External Auditors report

1. Overview - External Audit Financial year 2023/2024

The Council has received Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2023/2024.

2. The Background

By law, Council must approve the conclusion of audit. This Committee is asked to note the audit and recommend it to Council for approval. Below is an excerpt - External Auditor Limited Assurance Opinion 2023/2024. The Full Report is Appendix 4.

2 External auditor limited assurance opinion 2023/24

Except for the matters 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.

Section 1 of the AGAR was completed as approved on 24/06/2024 with a minute reference 04/2425. Section 2 of the AGAR was dated on the same day and had the same minute reference. On investigation (due to the same minute references used), the minutes provided by the council clearly show both Sections 1 and 2 were approved at the meeting held on 24/06/2024 and recorded as minute items 19/2425 and 20/2425. As such, the minute references reflected on the AGAR are incorrect. We would expect this to be reflected in the council's response to Assertion 3 on the 2024-25 return and any future minute references to match back to the reference provided in those minutes.

The published Notice of Public Rights requires the name, position and contact details of the person to contact to exercise public rights, usually the RFO, to be entered at line 2(b) on the form to satisfy the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Paragraph 15(2)(b), suggesting that public rights have not been properly provided. The Council should ensure this is fully completed in the future. We would expect Assertion 4 to reflect this on 2024/25 AGAR.

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

Insufficient information was provided with the intermediate testing supporting data submitted for review with regards to minutes evidencing the review of the fraud and corruption policy. The parish council should in future ensure that all the necessary supporting information is provided with their annual submission.

5. Future Actions required

- i. Greater attention is required by the RFO when reporting minute references and ensuring that references match those approved minutes.
- ii. The published Notice of Public Rights for 2024/2025 must contain the contact details so as to satisfy the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- iii. The Fraud and Corruption policy requires reviewing at the next Policy Committee meeting on the 10th February 2025.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to **NOTE** the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and the report of the External Auditor as well as future actions required.



BICESTER
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FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

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Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: ALL

Councillor Role Change

1. Report Detail

For personal reasons Deputy Mayor Jim Webb has reluctantly decided to step down from his role as deputy Mayor.

2. Standing Order 13 (Below)

13 Voting on appointments

Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.

3. Nominations

Councillors are asked in line with Standing Order 13 to **NOMINATE** a candidate to assume the role of the deputy Mayor for the remainder of the 2024/2025 period.



BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

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FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Ward Affected: All Wards

Overview

During the period of **8th October 2024 to 13th January 2025** - the following visits were made:

The Mayor, Cllr Damien Maguire, attended the following functions:

October

9th – St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Radio Show

11th – SSAFA, Open Doors Café

14th -18th – Assemblies, The Cooper School

15th – Bicester Baby Bank, Visit

15th – The High Sheriff's Court Sermon & Glove Ceremony, Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford

20th – Langford Community Orchard, Bicester

24th – Assembly, The Cooper School

25th – Wildlife Trust Awards

November

1st – Imagex Prize Draw, Pioneer Square

6th – Home Start AGM, Banbury

11th – Remembrance Service, Caversfield

20th – RAF Croughton, Civic Information Evening

28th – 30th Bicester Foodbank, Tesco

28th – 7 Year Celebration, Forget Me Not, Bicester

28th – 30th Bicester Foodbank, Tesco

December

6th – Christmas Tree Festival Opening, St Edburghs Church, Bicester

12th – Carol Service, HMP Bullingdon Prison

January

11th – Bicester Foodbank

The Mayor Cllr Damien Maguire and Consort Mrs Amanda Maguire, attended the following functions:

October

20th – Mayor of Thames Civic Service, St Mary's Church, Thame

22nd – Annual Lord Lieutenants Civic Service, Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford

November

10th – Remembrance Service, Parade and Lunch, St Edburghs Church / Officers' Mess, Bicester

16th – Chairman of Cherwell District Council, Charity Dinner, Banbury

December

13th - 16th – Twinning, Neunkirchen Seelscheid, Germany,

16th – Chair of Oxfordshire County Council Carol Service, Abingdon

22nd – Annual Christmas Carol Concert, Lord Mayor of Oxford, Town Hall

24th – Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas, Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford

January

10th – Chair of Oxfordshire County Council's Charity Gala, Mercure, Oxford

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Jim Webb and Consort Deb Webb, attended the following functions:

November

30th – Christmas Light Switch on, Market Square, Bicester

December

1st – Burford Civic Carol Service

15th – Santa Fun Run, Pingle Field, Bicester

16th – Oxfordshire County Council Chair's Carol Service, Abingdon



BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL REPORT

20th January 2025

Chair: Mayor Damien Maguire

Contact: 01869 252915 damien.maguire@bicester.gov.uk

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Ward Affected: ALL

Councillor Motions

1. Overview

Standing Order 2.0 allows councillors to raise a motion supported by a Councillor that's seconds the motion (in this case seconded by Councillor Nick Mawer)

The Motion to propose an Alternative budget has been made by Councillor Holland.

Motion 1

"This council re-affirms that it wants to retain access for all vehicles over the London Road Crossing Railway level Crossing. And, that it will respond to the non-statutory East West Rail consultation to that effect, urging them to re-consider their proposals".

The council should vote on whether to approve or reject the motion.

Motion 2

"This council views Oxfordshire County Council's 'Dark Skies' proposals with deep concern. Whilst the County Council have pledged to consult, we are deeply concerned about the impact this proposal will have on all Bicester residents' safety, but particularly that of women and girls, at night in our town.

We therefore request that the Town Clerk writes to Oxfordshire County Council confirming that this council will not support any proposal which negatively impacts the safety of its residents".

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of **Bicester Town Council**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

2 External auditor limited assurance opinion 2023/24

Except for the matters 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.

Section 1 of the AGAR was completed as approved on 24/06/2024 with a minute reference 04/2425. Section 2 of the AGAR was dated on the same day and had the same minute reference. On investigation (due to the same minute references used), the minutes provided by the council clearly show both Sections 1 and 2 were approved at the meeting held on 24/06/2024 and recorded as minute items 19/2425 and 20/2425. As such, the minute references reflected on the AGAR are incorrect. We would expect this to be reflected in the council's response to Assertion 3 on the 2024-25 return and any future minute references to match back to the reference provided in those minutes.

The published Notice of Public Rights requires the name, position and contact details of the person to contact to exercise public rights, usually the RFO, to be entered at line 2(b) on the form to satisfy the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Paragraph 15(2)(b), suggesting that public rights have not been properly provided. The Council should ensure this is fully completed in the future. We would expect Assertion 4 to reflect this on 2024/25 AGAR.

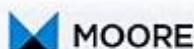
Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

Insufficient information was provided with the intermediate testing supporting data submitted for review with regards to minutes evidencing the review of the fraud and corruption policy. The parish council should in future ensure that all the necessary supporting information is provided with their annual submission.

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

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 2024.

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

Date

06/09/2024