

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Lowlands Area Planning Sub-Committee.**

Held in Committee Room One, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB at 2.00pm on
Monday 4 December 2023.

PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Goodwin (Vice-Chair), Phil Godfrey, Andrew Prosser, Rachel Crouch, Andrew Lyon, Alistair Wray, Julian Cooper, Adrian Walsh, Harry St. John, Nick Leverton, Michele Mead, and Lysette Nicholls.

Officers: Andrew Brown (Business Manager, Democratic Services), Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Joan Desmond (Principal Planner), Kate Alder (Planning Officer), Esther Hill (Planning Officer), Kelly Murray (Principal Planner (Enforcement and Appeals)) and Abby Fettes (Development Manager).

Other Councillors in attendance: Nil.

41 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Dan Levy, Michael Brooker, and Colin Dingwall.

Councillor Michele Mead substituted for Councillor Colin Dingwall.

42 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Michele Mead stated that application 23/02672/HHD was in her husband's name and would leave the room whilst the Sub-Committee considered the application.

Councillor Nick Leverton stated that he personally knew of the applicant relating to application 23/02672/HHD and would leave the room whilst the Sub-Committee considered the application.

Councillor Andrew Prosser stated that in relation to application 23/01524/FUL, the cabling would run along streets through his ward (Witney North).

Councillor Adrian Walsh stated that the site relating to application 23/02197/FUL was located within his ward.

Councillor Phil Godfrey stated that he personally knew of the applicant relating to application 23/02197/FUL, and with permission of the Chair, would observe proceedings from the public gallery whilst the Sub-Committee considered the application.

43 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Councillor Lysette Nicholls proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Monday 6 November 2023, be agreed by the Sub-Committee as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chair.

This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Prosser, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Monday 6 November 2023, as a true and accurate record.

44 Applications for Development

Ahead of the Applications for Development being considered by the Sub-Committee, the Chair advised there would be a meeting of the Development Control Committee taking place on Monday 5 February 2024 at 10.00am. Members were asked to note this in their diaries. The Chair also advised that further information regarding the meeting would be cascaded by Democratic Services when available.

23/01524/FUL – University Farm, Witney Road, Hailey, Witney, Oxfordshire OX29 9UH.

Joan Desmond, Principal Planner, introduced the application, for the installation and operation of a renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers, together with a switchgear container, inverter/transformer units, site access, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.

The Principal Planner drew the Committee's attention to the additional representations report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Bente Klein addressed the Sub-Committee on behalf of the applicant, which raised points of clarification surrounding outstanding paperwork related to the application, projected levels of construction traffic in the local area, destination of generated electricity from the site, and support to the local community in conjunction with Hailey Parish Council.

The Principal Planner continued with their presentation, which clarified the following points:

- Generation of approximately 35 megawatt of renewable electricity – Enough for the proposed site to provide renewable electricity for up to 15,000 homes over an estimated 40-year period;
- Character and visual impacts of the local area – The site would have harmful impacts on the landscape surrounding the proposed site, and more locally within the Hailey Conservation Area;
- The proposed site would help to achieve renewable energy targets stated and supported within the National Planning Policy Framework;
- The proposal would have a harmful impact on the character and landscape and heritage assets of the local area.

The Chair then invited the Sub-Committee to discuss the application, which raised the following points:

- Benefits of renewable energy more broadly – The site would help to provide renewable electricity for up to 15,000 homes in the local area;
- Harmful impacts of the site on the local conservation area – The proposed site would heavily impact land used regularly for agricultural purposes;
- Clarification of the Officer recommendations – The application was recommended by Officers for refusal, and Members were advised to consider the officer recommendations that were before the Sub-Committee;
- Height of the fencing on the perimeter of the proposed site – The site would be surrounded by fencing consistent with other solar farms;

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- Lack of supporting information related to the proposed site – The applicant had not submitted all the required information within the application. Given the late submission of additional information the applicant had been advised to withdraw the application and submit a fresh application;
- Impacts of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) within the local area – The proposal would see a substantial increase in construction traffic in the local area.

Councillor Lysette Nicholls proposed that the application be refused, in line with officer recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Nick Leverton, was put to a vote, and was agreed unanimously by the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Refuse the application, in line with officer recommendations.

23/02197/FUL – Mutchmeats Ltd. Abattoir, New Close Lane, Ducklington, Witney, Oxfordshire OX29 7GX.

Kate Alder, Planning Officer, introduced the retrospective application, for the erection of two semi-permanent single storey self-contained sleeper cabins.

Robin Heath addressed the Sub-Committee on behalf of the applicant, which raised points of clarification surrounding the intended use of the accommodation cabins, potential future growth of accommodation provisions, and the proximity of the site to other abattoirs in the region.

The Planning Officer continued with their presentation, which clarified the following points:

- The accommodation would be of a permanent fixing, and connected to the main water and sewage networks;
- The application would not meet or comply with Local Plan policies E1, OS2 and H2;
- Impacts of related odour connected to the site and the impacts of the odour in the local area, local community, and the impact on local residents;
- The site is located adjacent to a sewage works, which would add to impacts related to odour of the proposed site.

The Chair then invited the Sub-Committee to discuss the application, which raised the following points:

- Welfare of employees at the abattoir – The accommodation units would allow staff to exercise shift patterns without reasonable rest disturbances between shifts;
- Potential, future design features of additional accommodation – Members stated that additional accommodation provisions would need to be consistent with current accommodation provisions;
- Additional future use of the accommodation units for office purposes – The dwellings could be used for offices once accommodation is no longer required;
- Size of the accommodation units – Members deemed the accommodation units to be unfit for purpose, and small in size.

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Councillor Harry St. John proposed that the application be approved by the Sub-Committee, subject to agreed conditions. The proposition was not seconded and consequently fell.

Councillor Julian Cooper proposed that the application be refused, in line with officer recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Nick Leverton and was put to a vote. There were 5 votes in favour, 1 vote against, and 4 abstentions. The vote was carried.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Refuse the application, in line with officer recommendations.

23/02352/FUL – Land East of Main Road Stanton Harcourt Oxfordshire.

The Chair advised the Sub-Committee that the application had been withdrawn by the applicant and would not be considered at the meeting.

23/02672/HHD – 30 Milestone Road, Carterton, Oxfordshire OX18 3RG.

Abby Fettes, Development Manager, introduced the application, for the erection of a single storey front extension and porch.

The Application had come before the Sub-Committee as the applicant was a relation to a member of the Council.

Councillor Lysette Nicholls proposed that the application be approved, in line with officer recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Adrian Walsh, was put to a vote, and was agreed unanimously by the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Approve the application, in line with officer recommendations.

45 Applications Determined under Delegated Powers and Appeal Decisions

The report giving details of applications, determined under delegated powers, and decisions taken to appeal, was received, and noted by the Sub-Committee.

46 Progress on Priority Enforcement Cases

Kelly Murray, Principal Planner (Enforcement and Appeals), introduced the report, which provided an update on progress in respect of priority enforcement investigations.

The Principal Planner gave the Sub-Committee an overview of the recent workload of the Enforcement and Appeals Team and numbers of priority cases, and detailed the progress and nature of the outstanding enforcement investigations.

In debate, members asked for clarification of staffing levels within the enforcement and wider development management team and thanked the department for their continuing work.

The Sub-Committee noted the content of the report.

The Meeting Closed at 3.34pm.

CHAIR