

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

Lowlands Area Planning Sub-Committee

Held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB
at 2.00 pm on **Monday, 11 August 2025**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Coles, Steve Cosier, Rachel Crouch, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Andrew Lyon, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Andrew Prosser, Alaric Smith, Adrian Walsh, Alistair Wray and Liam Walker

Officers: James Nelson (Principal Planner) and Clare Anscombe (Senior Planner), George Matthews (Planner), Ana Prelici (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer).

Other Councillors in attendance: None.

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Apologies for Absence

Anne Learmonth, Democratic Services Officer commenced the meeting with the first item on the agenda.

Apologies for absence were received from the following councillors

Councillors Andy Goodwin, Michael Brooker, Phil Godfrey and Sarah Veasey.

Councillor Dan Levy substituted for Councillor Andy Goodwin

Councillor Andrew Coles substituted for Councillor Michael Brooker

Councillor Liam Walker substituted for Councillor Sarah Veasey

Councillor Alaric Smith substituted for Councillor Phil Godfrey.

The Democratic Services Officer advised that the Chair, Councillor Andy Goodwin and the Vice Chair, Councillor Michael Brooker had sent apologies and were absent. It was noted that in such circumstances the Sub-Committee was required to elect a substitute to Chair the meeting.

Councillor Rachel Crouch proposed that Councillor Andrew Coles chaired the Sub-Committee. Councillor Steve Cosier seconded the proposal.

Voting record – the vote was unanimous.

The Sub-Committee Resolved that:

- I. Councillor Andrew Coles Chair the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest were received from the following councillors.

24/01836/FUL Unit 32, Bridge Street, Mills Industrial Estate.

Councillor Rachel Crouch stated that she knew the applicants and would not vote on the application.

24/03177/FUL Land South of the Paddocks.

Councillor Steve Cosier stated that the application was in his ward, he was not predetermined and would be voting on the application.

24/03277/FUL Land (E) 44119 (N) 205720 Blackditch, Stanton Harcourt.

Councillor Steve Cosier stated that as the ward member for Stanton Harcourt he would speak for 3 minutes and would not vote on the application.

Councillor Dan Levy stated that as County Councillor that covered Stanton Harcourt, he was not predetermined and would vote on the application.

25/01031/S73 Carterton Leisure Centre, Broadshires Way, Carterton.

Councillors Andrew Prosser, Rachel Crouch and Alaric Smith as members of the executive would not vote on the application.

Councillor David Melvin stated that the application was in his ward, he was not predetermined, and he would vote on the application.

25/01338/ADV Unit 20, Woolgate Shopping Centre, Witney.

Councillors Andrew Prosser, Rachel Crouch and Alaric Smith as members of the executive would not vote on the application.

25/01396/S73 and 25/01397/S73 Land West of Colt House, Aston Road, Bampton.

Councillor Alistair Wray stated that the application was in his ward, he was not predetermined and would vote on the application.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Councillor Michele Mead proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 14 July be agreed by the Sub-Committee as a true and accurate record. The was seconded by Councillor Steve Cosier, was put to the vote and agreed by the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee Resolved to:

1. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 14 July 2025 as a true and accurate record.

35 Applications for Development

36 24/03277/FUL Land (E) 441191 (N) 205720 Blackditch

James Nelson, Principal Planner, presented the application for the demolition of majority of existing stable building. The erection of seven dwellings with associated works to include new access roads, carports, parking bays and soft and hard landscaping (amended plans).

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The sub-committee had attended a site visit before the meeting to view the concerns raised at the last meeting.
- The application was before the sub-committee due to objections from the Parish Council and 29 objections submitted on the Council's website.
- The site consisted of a 19th century stable at the front of Blackditch and was alongside Granary Way, which had a recent development of 40 dwellings. The site consisted of hardstanding and grassed paddock.
- Listed buildings were in close proximity to the site but their setting would not be adversely impacted. The proposed dwellings would comprise of seven houses, five 3-bed houses and two 4--bed houses set at the back of the development.

Sam Cook, agent for the application addressed the Sub-Committee which raised the following points: in terms of the layout, design and scale the application met the requirements of the relevant policies in the Local Plan. Sewage capacity and drainage, with the limited scale of the scheme officers did not consider it would be reasonable to withhold consent on the basis around drainage and flood rates. The applicant asked for members to follow officer's recommendations.

Councillor Steve Cosier, ward member addressed the Sub-committee which raised the following points: concern over parking spaces for visitors and multi occupancy homes with more cars than spaces available, the increased traffic to the village, the development would result in over development of the village and limited public transport links to and from the village.

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The Principal Planner brought the Sub-Committee's attention to the Additional Representation report and confirmed that no comment had been received from Thames Water.

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- The appearance and set out of the site were simplified and the dwellings were modest in design, with a mixture of slate and stonework.
- There would be a partial loss to the stable building and the loss of open space however there had been no objections from the Conservation Officer.
- Carports had been removed from the scheme, plot 6 had been moved away from the existing house behind and the gable shortened.
- Smaller sites were able to contribute to housing delivery.
- No objections had been received from Highways or Thames Water. The recommendation was for approval with delegated authority for ecological matters to be resolved.

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

- Members expressed concern over the lack of response from Thames Water.
- Concerns were raised regarding the parking provision for the housing and the use of HGV's when under construction in a small village.
- Concerns expressed over the capacity of the sewage pumping station that currently served the area and the extra housing adding to the pressures.

Councillor Liam Walker proposed the Sub-Committee approve the application as per officers recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Prosser and put to the vote.

Voting Record- For 9 Against 1 Abstention 1.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the application as per officers recommendation.

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24/03278/FUL Land (E) 431186 (N) 208772 Witney Road

James Nelson, Principal Planner, presented the application for the construction and operation of a ground-mounted solar farm with battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated infrastructure

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

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- Listed building around the site included Grove Farm and Caswell House.
- The site would be over 6 agricultural fields of varying sizes with access from Witney Road.
- Proposed landscaping included mitigation and fencing with panels set back for landscaping interventions to include green planting to act as a buffer.
- Panel design would be on racks, 3 meters in height and orientated to face South / West.
- Fencing would enclose a control building of 5 meters in height with security cameras to monitor the site.

Amanda Matthews and John Sutton, spoke in objection to the application which raised the following points; an independent assessment for the impact on the water system to Caswell House had been done and concerns were raised on chemical contamination from the control building in an event of a fire. A hand out was given to the members.

Michael Breslaw, agent for the application addressed the Sub-Committee which raised the following points; the land to be used was low grade agricultural land, there would be a 79% biodiversity net gain from planting including woodland planting and the local parish councils would have a community benefit from the scheme. Robust measures had been taken to protect the natural spring on the Caswell House site.

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- Policy EH6 supports renewable energy applications. The proposed site would provide energy for 12,000 homes in the area.
- There would not be an adverse impact on best and versatile land. An independent review had been submitted regarding landscape and visual impacts. Wildlife would be supported with the planting of woodlands.
- The benefits of the application outweighed the harms. Environment and Drainage officers had reviewed risks to water and had secured conditions with a risk management plan.
- No comments had been received from the MOD or highways. The application was for approve subject to S106 agreement being finalised.

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

- The members raised concern that not enough time was available to read the handout circulated by the objectors.

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- A detailed Construction traffic plan be submitted as a condition due to concerns of damage to roads and dirt churned up by HGV vehicles. The Principal Planner confirmed there had been no request from highways for this.
- A recommendation for the S106 agreement to secure monitoring costs of the site was clarified by the Principal Planner.
- Concerns were raised about water safety and drainage issues, the impact on the water source in the area if contamination occurred.

Councillor Liam Walker proposed that the Sub-Committee defer the application to enable further consideration of the potential water pollution concerns arising from the location and design of the proposed BESS facility. This was seconded by Councillor Steve Cosier and put to the vote.

Voting Record- For 10 Against 3 Abstention 0.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

1. enable further consideration of the potential water pollution concerns arising from the location and design of the proposed BESS facility.

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24/01836/FUL Unit 32, Bridge Street Mills Industrial Estate

James Nelson, Principal Planner, presented the application for the erection of four apartments at second floor level with associated stair, lift and flood access, demolition of existing metal roof structure (amended plans).

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The site was currently used as a gym, studio and therapy centre. The building originally had a second floor however this was destroyed in a fire. A metal roof had been constructed following this and caused issues with heat and condensation during summer and winter.
- There had been no objections from Environment Agency, Highways, Conservation and Design Officer. No comments were received from Thames Water.
- The application was for 4 flats to be accessed from the private parking area to the northeast of the site. Proposed use of brick metal, glass and glass block would maintain the character and design of the current building.
- A proposed egress in event of a flood which would provide a suspended walkway about the flood level leading to Bridge Street.
- A central area for bin and secure cycle storage.
- Vehicle parking with 12 bays provided including one EV charging point.

Anthony Pettorino, agent addressed the Sub-Committee which raised the following points: the merits of the application were housing was being provided without using land. The design had been amended using materials in keeping with the buildings character. An acoustic assessment had been done and a noise management plan was in place including sprung floors.

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- Benefits were the use of space above commercial units with limited impact on the businesses in situ.
- The site was highly sustainable with links to local amenities and provision for transport links.
- The site was in Flood Zone 3 however due to the location on the second floor the real world risks were minimal and safe means of escape had been demonstrated.
- The application was recommended for approval.

Councillor Nick Leverton proposed the Sub-Committee approve the application in line with officer recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Adrian Walsh and put to the vote.

Voting Record- For 12 Against 0 Abstention 1.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

1. approve the application in line with officer recommendations.

24/03177/FUL Land South of the Paddocks

James Nelson, Principal Planner, presented the application for the erection of a single detached dwelling and associated works (amended plans).

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The application was for a single two storey dwelling, with provision of ample garden and parking for three vehicles.
- The site was currently a pasture with access from the Paddocks cul-de-sac development.
- The Parish Council had raised objections including access concerns, sewage capacity concerns, loss of green space and create development beyond the village edge.
- No objections had been submitted from Environmental Health, Conservation and Design officer, Highways and Archaeological services.

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- The proposed property would provide a 4-bedroom family home on an L-shaped footprint over two floors. The scale would be in keeping with existing properties in the area.
- The proposed materials would include Cotswold stone and natural blue slate roofing and there would be no loss to existing trees and hedgerows.

Clive Mitchell, applicant addressed the Sub-Committee which raised the following points: the application was before the sub-committee due to objections from neighbours and the Parish Council. Each concern had been addressed with support from the Planning Officer, no objections were submitted from statutory consultees, and the application was in keeping with planning policy.

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The site was on undeveloped land and close to residential development to the northeast . The application was acceptable under planning policy H2 where a housing need was identified.
- The design was of a compact form, was in keeping with the character of the Paddocks cul-de-sac and would form a logical complement to the existing housing.
- The site had a minimal view from the road and there was a small loss of area to the Paddock. There was no loss of light and the design was not overbearing on neighbouring properties.
- The application was recommended for approval.

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

- Member had concerns regarding the capacity of the sewage pumping station which was considered to be unable to further residential developments and result on negative impacts for current housing.
- Concerns about the dwelling being on the edge of the village and having an urban sprawl impact.
- Further information was referred to from the Environment agency which raised more concerns about the sewage capacity and highlighted no comments from Thames Water.

Councillor Liam Walker proposed the Sub-Committee approve the application in line with officer recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Michele Mead and put to the vote.

Voting Record- For 3 Against 8 Abstention 2. The vote fell.

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Councillor Nick Leverton proposed to defer the application to enable consideration of the sewage capacity at the site in light of capacity issues in the area. This was seconded by Councillor Steve Cosier and put to the vote.

Voting Record- For 10 Against 3 Abstention 0.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Enable consideration of sewerage capacity at the site in light of known capacity issues in the area.

The Chair advised that the Sub-Committee had further applications to consider which would take the time over the 3 hour time limit for the meeting and proposed that the Sub-Committee vote to extend the meeting time by 1 hour. This was seconded by Councillor Steve Cosier, put to the vote and agreed unanimously.

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25/01031/573 Carterton Leisure Centre Broadshires Way

Clare Anscombe, Senior Planner, presented the application for the variation of conditions 6 and 7 of planning permission 23/02420/FUL to allow the wording of the conditions to be changed to allow the installation of the solar panels and plant without submission of the arboricultural surveys and landscaping plans.

The Senior Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- the application was before the Sub-Committee to for the variation of conditions 6 & 7 and to change the wording to allow the installation of solar panels at Carterton Leisure Centre.
- The application was made by West Oxfordshire District Council.
- Original plan was for a decarbonisation scheme with planting and solar panels on the existing roof of the leisure centre.
- Condition 6 requested an arboricultural method statement to safeguard the character of the area.
- The application was for the solar panels, air source heat pumps and planting to be installed with the statement being submitted at a later date.
- The conditions were imposed to protect the character of the area, existing trees and amenities. It was considered the development was unlikely to affect the existing trees, the variation to condition 6 was considered acceptable and the tree officer had no objections to the application.
- Conditions 2,3,4 and 5 would remain.

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

- Members commended the officer on the report and agreed that this was a suitable place for solar panels in the area.

Councillor Liam Walker proposed the Sub-Committee approve the application in line with officer recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Nick Leverton and put to the vote.

Voting Record- For 8 Against 0 Abstention 3.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

1. approve the application in line with officer recommendations.

Councillors Melvin and Lyon left the meeting at 5.04pm.

41 25/01338/ADV Unit 20 Woolgate Shopping Centre

George Matthews, Planner, presented the application for re-branding of fascia and hanging signs.

The Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The application was for the consent of rebranding fascia and hanging signs at Unit 20, Woolgate Centre.
- The application was before the Sub-Committee due to being council owned land.
- The existing sign was to be replaced due to change in company name, from WH Smith to TG Jones.
- The signage would be wrapped in vinyl alongside surface mounted acrylic 3325mm in length and 383mm in height. Two existing hanging signs would also be replaced.

Councillor Liam Walker proposed the Sub-Committee approve the application in line with officer recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Rachel Crouch and put to the vote.

Voting Record- The vote was unanimous.

The Sub-Committee Resolved to:

1. Approve the application in line with officer recommendations.

42 25/01396/S73 Land West of Colt House Aston Road

James Nelson, Principal Planner, presented the application for the removal of condition 3 permission 22/03370/FUL to remove age restrictions. And James Nelson, Principal Planner,

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presented the application for the removal of condition 3 permission 24/01471/FUL to remove age restrictions.

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The Principal Planner explained the two applications and the Sub-Committee were advised that each would be voted on separately. The first application was highlighted in red for 25/01396/S73 application for 6 bungalows and the second application was highlighted in blue for 25/01397/S73 application for a further 3 bungalows.
- The applications were restricted to residents aged 55 years and over. The applications were before the sub-committee to remove both restrictions on both 25/01396/S73 and 25/01397/S73 applications to allow the dwellings to become un-fettered.
- There were no physical changes to both applications. The changes would allow any age to live in the dwellings.
- On 25/01396/S73 application the change would not tip the planning balance in favour of refusal and the application would remain acceptable.
- The council could not demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, and the applications support the need for housing in the area where there are local amenities.

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

- At the time of the application the proposed application identified a need for housing within the age group the condition covered. Both sites were on the edge of Bampton. What would have changed for the applicants to request the amendments to the conditions. The Principal Planner explained that there would still be a need for housing in the age group identified, however the change identified is the increased need for housing since the applications were heard at the Sub-Committee in 2023.
- The Principal Planner officer gave a history of the applications and an appeal.
- Concerns raised that the increase in demand but not supply to those groups identified in the original application and the request for the change in a short time frame from 2023.

25/01396/S73 Land West of Colt House Aston Road

Councillor Liam Walker proposed that the Sub-Committee approve the application in line with officer's recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Michele Mead and put to the vote.

Voting Record- For 4 Against 6 Abstention 1. The vote fell.

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Councillor Dan Levy proposed that the Sub-Committee refuse the application due to no changes since the removal, would result in loss separate in type of housing with identified need and not demonstrated. This was seconded by Councillor Adrian Walsh and put to the vote.

Voting Record- For 9 Against 2 Abstention 0.

The Sub-Committee Resolved to:

- I. Refuse the application as it would result in the loss of specialist housing with identified need and it had not been demonstrated that this need had reduced since the previous approval.

43 25/01397/S73 Land West of Colt House Aston Road

Councillor Dan Levy proposed that the Sub-Committee refuse the application due to no changes since the removal, would result in loss separate in type of housing with identified need and not demonstrated. This was seconded by Councillor Adrian Walsh and put to the vote.

Voting Record- For 9 Against 2 Abstention 0.

The Sub-Committee Resolved to:

- I. Refuse the application as it would result in the loss of specialist housing with identified need and it had not been demonstrated that this need had reduced since the previous approval.

44 Applications Determined under Delegated Powers

The report giving details of the applications determined under Delegated Powers was received, explained by the officers and noted by the Sub-Committee.

45 Appeal Decisions

The report giving details of the appeals was received, explained by the officers and noted by the Sub-Committee.

46 Progress on Enforcement Cases

The Chair confirmed the report for Progress on Enforcement Cases had been added to the agenda in error and a report would be presented to the Sub-Committee at October's meeting.

47 Site Visits

The Principal Planner confirmed there were no site visit reports to consider.

The Meeting closed at 5.16 pm

CHAIR