

## 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, 8 September 2025**

#### PRESENT

Councillors: , Michael Brooker (Vice-Chair), Steve Cosier, Rachel Crouch, Phil Godfrey, Nick Leverton, Andrew Lyon, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Sarah Veasey, Adrian Walsh, Alistair Wray and Dan Levy.

Officers: James Nelson (Principal Planner), Clare Anscombe (Principal Planner) and Rebekah Orriss (Planner) and Josh McFarland (Planner), Andrew Brown (Head of Democratic and Electoral Services), Ana Prelici (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer).

Other Councillors in attendance: None.

#### **48 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, Councillor Andy Goodwin and Councillor Andrew Prosser.

Councillor Dan Levy substituted for Councillor Goodwin.

Councillor Simpson substituted for Councillor Prosser.

#### **49 Declarations of Interest**

Declarations of Interest were received from the following councillors.

24/03177/FUL Land South of the Paddocks.

Councillor Steve Cosier – declared he had spoken to the local residents and visited the site. Councillor Cosier had contacted the legal team for advice, was not predetermined and would be voting on the application.

25/01129/FUL Land West of Nursery, 6 Oxford Road, Eynsham.

Councillor Nick Leverton declared he knew the applicant and would not be voting on the application.

25/01557/PN56 Windrush Leisure Centre, Witan Way, Witney.

Councillor Rachel Crouch declared that she was a member of the Executive and would not vote on the application.

#### **50 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Councillor Michele Mead proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 11 August 2025 be agreed by the Sub-Committee as a true and accurate record. This was seconded by Councillor Rachel Crouch, 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 11 August 2025.

**51 Applications for Development**

**52 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 had been deferred from the last Sub-Committee for more information relating to foul water.
- The application was brought before the Sub-Committee due to objections from the Parish Council.
- The principal planner drew the Sub-Committee's attention to the additional representations report and the amended plans that had been submitted during the application process which re-sited the dwelling.
- The proposed site was located at the southern edge of the village with access off Bull Street onto the residential close, The Paddocks.
- The site was in the Aston Conservation area with open countryside to the south and west of the site.
- The proposed two storey dwelling would be built in the centre of the site with a garage using local materials.

Tony Pascoe spoke in objection to the application which raised the following points: the application was not supported by the Parish Council, the development would put stress on the infrastructure, particularly the sewage system, the dwelling was not in character with the rest of the Paddocks and the Southwestern building line protected the boundary of the village. The access route from Bull Street and between resident's dwellings would be under stress with the proposed dwelling.

Clive Mitchell, the applicant raised the following points: The sewage problem was an immotive subject as was drainage water, however the drainage officer had not objected to the application. The applicant would consider an independent sewage treatment system. The Council could not demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and the tilted balance applied as per the officer's recommendations in the report.

Members asked the applicant if they would be willing to have a separate sewage treatment system if it was added as a condition, the applicant agreed that they would. Members raised concerns that this would increase traffic to the site, the applicant confirmed that a risk assessment had not been done however on an average of 15 households a tank would be emptied twice a year.

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The proposed development was a residential house and complied with policy H2 of the Local Plan. The proposed dwelling was formed a logical compliment to the existing houses on the site of the Paddocks.

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- The proposed dwelling would be slightly lower in height in comparison to neighbouring dwellings. The design would be of a compact footprint built with local materials and in keeping with existing dwellings.
- The amended plans have re-sited the proposed dwelling resulting in the no adverse impacts on numbers 3 and 5 The Paddocks and would not result in overlooking or loss of light.
- The site lay in flood zone 1. There was no comment from Thames Water or objections from the drainage officer.
- The Highways Authority had been consulted, and no objections were raised to the application subject to conditions that parking and turning facilities were provided on the site.
- The recommendation was to approve the application subject to the conditions set out in the officer's report.

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

- Members were concerned there were no comments from Thames Water and no Environment Agency (EA) report. The Principal Planner explained that the scale of the proposed site and dwelling did not identify a meaningful impact on the sewage system. The EA were not statutory consultees.
- The members highlighted the concern that the proposed dwelling would extend the village pushing the boundary southwards. This would encourage over development. The Principal Planner confirmed the site was contained well and adjacent to the neighbouring property not extending out into the open countryside.

Councillor Steve Cosier proposed the Sub-Committee refuse the application against officer recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Dan Levy and put to the vote.

**Voting Record** – 4 For, 5 Against, 3 Abstentions – the vote fell.

The Chair proposed the Sub-Committee approve the application as per officer recommendations with 1. additional condition to require foul water to be disposed by septic tank, 2. to add an informative to suggest that the Committee did not see the use of septic tanks as an appropriate long term solution. This was seconded by Councillor Alistair Wray and put to the vote.

**Voting Record** – 7 for, 4 against, 2 abstentions.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the application as per officer recommendations with additional condition to require foul water to be disposed by septic tank.

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2. Add an informative to suggest that the Committee did not see the use of septic tanks as an appropriate long term solution.

**53 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, access, ancillary works and landscaping.

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The Principal Planner brought the members attention to the additional representations report which included an additional letter of objection to the application from Mr and Mrs Matthews which had been circulated to members and was available to view on the council's website.
- The site was made up of 6 fields which were situated to the south of the A40 road and North of Witney Road. The fields were irregular form and undeveloped fields. Established hedgerows retained boundary vegetation and the fields were set back from the roads.
- The buffer zone would be extended with mitigation planting to contain the site. This also included woodland screening. A Landscape review had been included in the application.
- The solar panels would be 3 meters in height on racks with a substation infrastructure. The site would be surrounded by a fence and CCTV.

Amanda and Richard Matthews spoke in objection the application which raised the following points: A letter from John Sutton had been circulated to members which highlighted concerns of the impacts on the spring and stream on the Caswell house site and risk to the water spring.

Aiden Van de Weyer, agent for applicant addressed the sub-committee which raised the following points: there were detailed conditions as part of the officer's report to cover potential risks with the operation of the site. The applicant had submitted a comprehensive design to deal with any hazards, including ongoing monitoring the water from the spring, landscape and ecology.

Members asked the speaker if there were emergency plans in place in case of an event and if the BESS could be relocated. The speaker confirmed that various sites had been looked at for the BESS and found the current location was the best option.

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- Drainage strategy had been submitted with documents. There were no objections from the Oxfordshire County Council flood risk officer.

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- The application was in line with policy EH6 and the principle of the application was supported with the preservation of the landscape and benefits of low carbon energy provision and storage.
- The application had allowed for mitigated impacts on landscape with preservation of hedgerows and additional planting, extension of boundary and the connectivity for wildlife.
- No objections had been received on heritage grounds and the recommendation was for approval subject to the S106 agreement, with condition 8 wording to be updated in order to ensure baseline and ongoing testing and monitoring of the private water supply serving Caswell House and additional conditions recommended by the LLFA.

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

- Members raised concerns about the monitoring of construction traffic and potential waste matters such as dust and construction waste which could contribute to water sources being contaminated. The Principal Planner explained that Highways had not suggested a construction traffic management plan as the site was close to a main road network with access off the A40 from the new roundabout.
- Members asked about the risk of fire at the substation and how it could be contained. The Chair explained the process for tackling a fire and containing it within the BESS unit. There were concerns that the materials used to tackle a potential fire could contaminate the water supply. The Principal Planner confirmed there was a condition in the report which ensure the safety measures taken in the event of a fire.
- Members raised concerns about the location of the BESS and the solar farm and the potential harms that Caswell House and the surrounding environment could be exposed to should there be a fire or water contamination event. Councillor Nick Leverton proposed the Sub-Committee refuse the application on the grounds that the application had failed to demonstrate an appropriate impact on the water supply serving Caswell House in accordance with policies OS2 and EH8. This was seconded by Councillor Steve Cosier and put to the vote.

**Voting Record** – 9 for, 1 against, 2 abstentions.

The Sub-Committee Resolved to

1. Refuse the application on the grounds that the application had failed to demonstrate an appropriate impact on the water supply serving Caswell House in accordance with policies OS2 and EH8.

Clare Anscombe, Senior Planner, presented the application for the erection of 1 self-build dwelling and garage.

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The Senior Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The application was for a residential dwelling. The plot was surrounded by, Grade II listed buildings and St Leonard's Church (Grade II\* listed).
- The site was on the former Eynsham Abbey (Scheduled Monument) and was within the Eynsham conservation area.
- To the right of 6 Oxford Road there was a residential property.
- The application was for a 1.5 storey dwelling with garage including a pitched roof form with proposed materials of red brick, render and slate roof tiles.

John Jago, the applicant addressed the sub-committee which raised the following points: a history of the site and previous planning history. The dwelling would be custom built. The applicant raised the possibility of members attending a site visit to get an idea of the plot and surroundings.

The Senior Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- Highlighted the policies which protected the area and gave a strong reason to refuse the application.
- Advised that Historic England and the Conservation officer had raised objections to the application with concerns of the impact on St Leonard's Church, 'The Shrubbery' and harm to the conservation area.
- The public benefits of the scheme did not outweigh the harms.
- There was no clear information on which trees would be retained.
- Even though the planning benefits were considered, the harms and impacts to the area outweighed the benefits. The recommendation was for refusal.

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

- The members acknowledged the concerns from the heritage officer and Historic England. They also considered the history of the site and what surrounding housing was near by the site.

Councillor Dan Levy proposed the Sub-Committee defer the application to conduct a site visit on Monday 13 October at 12pm. This was seconded by Councillor Steve Cosier and put to the vote.

**Voting Record** – 11 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Defer the application to conduct a site visit on Monday 13 October at 12pm.

Councillors Mead and Leverton left the meeting at 3.53pm.

**55 25/00277/FUL 87 Moorland Road**

Clare Anscombe, the Senior Planner presented the application for the change of use of land to extend residential curtilage and erection of a fence.

The Senior Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The land was currently listed as amenity land north of Welch Way and was in flood zone 2.
- The proposed fence was open boarded and provided screening to the property.
- The proposal did not impact the character of the surrounding area and was in keeping with the landscape of the area. With the suggested planting, it would provide a positive appearance to the area.
- The application complied with the key policies in the Local Plan and was recommended for approval.

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

- The members asked for confirmation on the distance between the proposed fence and the trees and if the trees were protected by a tree preservation order as it was not clear.
- The senior planner confirmed that the trees would be outside the curtilage, and the trees were not in a conservation area and not protected by a tree preservation order.
- The members asked where the fence would be positioned and raised concerns that the fence could disturb the roots of the trees nearby. The Senior Planner confirmed that the post fences would not be too far in the ground and spaced at 6ft intervals.
- The members asked for confirmation of who owned the surrounding green land and who was responsible for the amenity area. The Senior Planner confirmed that the fence and additional planting of shrubs would soften the appearance and fit in the character.

Councillor Dan Levy proposed the Sub-Committee defer the application to clarify land ownership. This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Lyon and put to the vote.

**Voting Record** – unanimous.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Defer the application to clarify land ownership.

Councillor Steve Cosier left the meeting at 4.15pm.

**56 25/00840/FUL Land (e) 248631 (n) 204548 Burford Road**

Rebekah Orriss, Planner presented the application for the change of use of building for storage of agricultural and commercial equipment.

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The Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The application was before the sub-committee due to an objection from the Parish Council who opposed the change of use as it contravened the conditions of the original application.
- The application was for retrospective planning permission to change the use of the building for a mixed use of agricultural and commercial equipment in association with Lockhart Plant Hire Ltd.
- The current site was used by a plant hire business and adjoined the Lockhart Plant hire site in Black Bourton with a hedge separating the sites.
- The site was not in any designated areas, there was a listed building, the Old Farmhouse, within 100 meters to the east of the site but there would be no impact on the listed building.
- The current building had a corrugated roof and was surrounded by gravel.
- The application was considered acceptable with other material considerations. There were no objections from Highways as an increase in traffic was not expected.
- A noise impact report had been submitted and there was a limited impact on the neighbouring properties.
- The officer recommendation was for approval.

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

- The chair clarified the use of the site in the past by the applicants and how the site would be used in the future with wider use.

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

**Voting Record** – the vote was unanimous.

The Sub-Committee Resolved to:

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

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### **25/01557/PN56 Windrush Leisure Centre, Witan Way**

Josh McFarland, Planner, presented the application for the installation of solar panel PV system to flat roof areas of leisure centre.

The Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The application was before the sub-committee on behalf of the Council, and the property was owned by the Council.



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- The solar panels would be positioned on the flat part of the roof of the Windrush Leisure Centre. The PV would not be higher than 1 meter above the highest part of the roof (excluding the chimney) and 1 meter from the external edge of the roof.
- There would be a low visibility impact as the solar panels are to be located on the roof.
- There were no objections to the application.

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

- It was confirmed that the application was before the sub-committee because the property was owned by West Oxfordshire District Council.

Councillor Dan Levy proposed the Sub-Committee approve the application in line with officer recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor David Melvin and put to the vote.

**Voting Record** – the vote was unanimous.

The Sub-Committee Resolved to:

- I. Committee approve the application in line with officer recommendations.

## **58 Applications Determined under Delegated Powers**

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

## **59 Appeal Decisions**

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

## **60 Site Visits**

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

The Meeting closed at 4.33 pm

CHAIR