

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, 10 February 2025**

PRESENT

Councillors: Michael Brooker (Chair), Andy Goodwin (Vice-Chair), Julian Cooper, Rachel Crouch, Dan Levy, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Andrew Prosser, Sarah Veasey, Adrian Walsh and Alistair Wray

Officers: James Nelson (Principal Planner), Kelly Murray (Principal Planner for Enforcement and Appeals), Ana Prelici (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer), Mathew Taylor (Democratic Services Officer).

Other Councillors in attendance: None.

94 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Lyon, Councillor Nick Leverton and Councillor Phil Godfrey.

Councillor Dan Levy substituted for Councillor Phil Godfrey.

95 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

96 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Councillor Sarah Veasey proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 13 January 2025, be agreed by the Sub-Committee as a true and accurate record. This was seconded by Councillor Adrian Walsh, was put to the vote and was agreed unanimously by the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 13 January 2025 as a true and accurate record.

97 Applications for Development

98 24/02033/FUL Bridge House, Bridge Street, Shilton

James Nelson, Principal Planner presented the application for proposed photovoltaic solar panel installation comprising 42 panels on the roof of the spa building and 120 ground mounted panels.

The applicant, Mark Smith addressed the Sub-Committee, which raised the following points: clarification that the pool would not be heated by the solar panels, heat pumps were used to heat the pool and the excess power would only be exported during the summer months.

The Principal Planner's presentation addressed the following points:

- The application site was to the east of Bridge House and included a pool house and gym, with a paddock accessed by a gate to the existing field.

10/February2025

- Bridge House, a Grade II listed building, was situated within the Shilton Conservation Area.
- The Parish Council had objected to the siting of the ground-mounted solar panels on agricultural land.
- The application was in line with local plan policies OS3 and EH6 with a view of supporting renewable or low-carbon energy development and energy efficiency.
- Planting of hedgerows would provide a natural shield, and the solar panels would be largely screened from public view.
- The field could be re-used if the solar panels were removed.
- Given the modest level of heritage harm identified, whilst applying great weight to this harm, the public benefits resulting from the scheme were considered to outweigh the heritage harm.
- The Council's Biodiversity Officer raised a holding objection due to insufficient information received. Further comments would be submitted, and this would be resolved in writing and be agreed with the Chair.
- The Officer recommendation was for provisional approval.

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

- Members thanked the officer for a comprehensive report.
- Members raised concerns that the solar panels would be placed in Shilton Conservation Area due to the character and appearance of site.
- The National Planning Policy Framework NPPF supported renewable energy however there were concerns raised on heritage impacts and an urbanising effect on the area.
- Members asked whether the installation of other associated equipment, such as battery packs, fences would be included in the application. The Officer confirmed that a new application would have to be submitted to cover these.
- Members asked if part of the application for 42 solar panels on the spa be considered separately. The Officer confirmed that by reducing the number of panels the benefits would be reduced as well.

Councillor Dan Levy proposed to defer the application for a site visit on Monday 10 March at 12pm. This was seconded by the Chair and was put to the vote.

Voting record- 9 for the proposal and 1 vote against. The vote was carried.

99 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.

10/February2025

100 Appeal Decisions

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

101 Progress on 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 Officer explained that a vacancy within the team had been filled which had helped with caseloads and progression of cases.

The Officer explained the numbers of caseloads and what stages various cases were at, however where certain cases were sensitive, such as those going to court, these could not be discussed in full.

Members thanked the Officer and team for all their hard work and detailed report.

The Meeting closed at 2.53pm

CHAIR