

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY 2026

Councillors Present: Alan Macro (Chairman), Richard Somner (Vice-Chairman), Jeremy Cottam, Paul Kander, Tom McCann, Ross Mackinnon and Justin Pemberton

Also Present: Sian Cutts, Paul Goddard, Thomas Radbourne, Simon Till, Ben Ryan, Claire Say

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Vicky Poole and Councillor Clive Taylor

PART I

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2025 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. Schedule of Planning Applications

(1) 25/00357/FUL Youngs Industrial Estate Paices Hill

1. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(1)) concerning Planning Application 25/00357/FUL in respect of retrospective change of use of land to B8 storage use with retention of ancillary temporary office use. Compound A3, Youngs Industrial Estate, Paices Hill.
2. Ms Sian Cutts introduced the report to Members, which took account of all the relevant policy considerations and other material planning considerations. In conclusion the report detailed that the proposal was acceptable in planning terms and officers recommended that the Development Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions outlined in the main and update reports.
3. The Chairman asked Mr Paul Goddard if he had any observations relating to the application, who made the following points:
 - The location of the site was well within the Paices Hill industrial estate, quite some distance from the A340. The existing access onto the A340 would be used. The proposal was projected to employ seven staff and would therefore generate low levels of traffic generation.
 - Officers noted that traffic levels were a concern on the A340, particularly through Aldermaston, however the traffic associated with the proposal should be low and should not cause harm.

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- Officers highlighted that the site was previously used as a garden centre, which would have generated an amount of traffic.
 - The layout of the site was considered acceptable, and the site would be conditioned to limit the use to B8 Industrial storage rather than a general industrial B2 use which would have generated higher traffic levels.
 - The Local Highway Authority raised no objection to the proposal.
4. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Ms Sophie Crawford and Mr Rob Smith, Parish Council representatives, Mr Adam Place, agent, and Councillor Dominic Boeck, Ward Member, addressed the Committee on this application.

Parish/Town Council Representation

5. Ms Crawford and Mr Smith addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee – Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Parish/Town Council

6. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Agent Representation

7. Mr Place addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee – Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Applicant/Agent

8. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
- The tenant had been on-site for approximately three years.
 - The agent did not know the specific hours of operation on the site but noted that the wider industrial estate had overnight barriers, limiting access.

Ward Member Representation

9. Councillor Boeck addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Ward Member

10. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Member Questions to Officers

11. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
- It was confirmed that the Emergency Plan involved using the office for shelter and the Emergency Planning Officer was satisfied with its current suitability. A seven-year review condition was proposed to ensure it remained fit for purpose over time.
 - No conditions on hours of operation or lighting had been proposed, however, if members felt a condition would be appropriate, a lighting condition could be added.
 - Regarding the application of emergency planning policy to commercial and residential applications, officers highlighted that residential development presented different challenges, including permitted development rights. Officers stressed that the administration of the On-site Emergency Plan (OSEP) was a strategic policy matter, and the Committee must assess each application on its individual merits.
 - The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) was the responsible statutory authority, which takes advice from the Council's emergency planning team. The Ministry Of

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Defence (MOD) and Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) were subject to the ONR's controls. The ONR had no objections and was satisfied with the application.

- Officers explained that 'temporary' was a matter of fact and degree, relating to a building's non-permanent character. It was clarified that the appeal cited by officers was more relevant as it was based on current, adopted policies. Officers confirmed West Berkshire Council was a core stakeholder in the OSEP and enforced it in conjunction with the ONR. The proposed seven-year review would be an enforceable condition for the planning authority to monitor.

Debate

12. Councillor Richard Somner opened the debate, acknowledging the concerns that always arose with applications near AWE. He felt the key consideration was the view of the Council's emergency planning team and the ONR, as the main regulators. On that basis, he was in favour of the application.
13. Councillor Jeremy Cottam stated that he trusted the judgement of the emergency officers and the ONR on what was a very serious matter. He considered the risk from this small-scale application to be very low, particularly when compared to its previous, more intensive use as a garden centre. He noted the importance of supporting local businesses and jobs and was minded to support the application.
14. Councillor Ross Mackinnon acknowledged the Ward Member's point about incremental development but felt it was the responsibility of the emergency planner and ONR to highlight if they had concerns. He found the clear hierarchy of regulation, with the ONR as the ultimate authority, and the lack of objection from both the ONR and the Council's own emergency planning officer to be persuasive.
15. Officers clarified that the additional condition recommended by Councillor Cottam would be as follows: Within three months of approval of the application a scheme of external lighting is to be submitted. No other external lighting should be erected except in accordance with that scheme. The reason for that being in the interests of the community in the surrounding area
16. Councillor Somner proposed to accept Officer's recommendation and grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the main report and update report. This was seconded by Councillor Cottam, with the caveat that a condition be added regarding Dark Skies Lighting.
17. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Somner, seconded by Councillor Cottam to grant planning permission. At the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Development Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions in the main report and update report (subject to the following amendments):

Conditions

Within three months of the date of this permission a scheme for any external lighting to be installed on the office building hereby approved and/or Compound A3 shall be submitted in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include a plan to show the location of any lighting, isolux contour diagram(s), an operation strategy (e.g. details of timed operation), and specifications all lighting to ensure that levels are designed within the limitations of Environmental Lighting Zone 1, as described by the Institute of Lighting Engineers. No external lighting shall be installed on the office building hereby approved and/or Compound A3 except in accordance with the above strategy.

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Reason: To protect the amenity of the local area. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies SP7 and SP8 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.

4. 25/00395/FUL Youngs Industrial Estate Paices Hill

18. Ms Sian Cutts introduced the report to Members, which took account of all the relevant policy considerations and other material planning considerations. In conclusion the report detailed that the proposal was acceptable in planning terms and officers recommended that the Development Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions outlined in the main and update reports.
19. The Chairman asked Mr Paul Goddard if he had any observations relating to the application.
 - The location of the site was some distance from the highway, all existing accesses were being used. The site was once part of a garden centre, so it would have had a level of traffic generation. The traffic levels with this application were expected to be very low, as the site would only be used for storage. Highways Officers raised no objection subject to the condition that had been applied limiting the use to B8.
20. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Ms Sophie Crawford and Mr Rob Smith, Parish Council representatives, Mr Adam Place, agent, and Councillor Dominic Boeck, Ward Member, addressed the Committee on this application.

Parish Council Representation

21. Ms Crawford and Mr Smith addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Parish/Town Council

22. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Agent Representation

23. Mr Place addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee – Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Agent

24. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
 - The agent confirmed that the next step for the Council, if the application was refused, would be to serve an enforcement notice requiring a return to the previous lawful use, although a revised application could also be submitted. He maintained that B8 use had the least impact of all possible uses.
 - Regarding the distance from the compounds to the designated office for shelter in an emergency, the agent believed that it was a suitable distance which could be covered quickly.

Ward Member Representation

25. Councillor Boeck addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Ward Member

26. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

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Member Questions to Officers

27. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:

- Regarding a question on whether the Atomic Weapons Establishment's (AWE) views were being given sufficient weight, and whether the Council should undertake a wider strategic review of the area, officers stated that these were strategic issues for the Local Plan Review process, not individual development management decisions. The recently adopted Local Plan contained a policy for managing development in the On-site Emergency Plan (OSEP), which was itself subject to continuous review by all stakeholders, including the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and AWE. The ONR was the paramount authority in the hierarchy and that AWE, whose primary concern was the operation of their site, was likely to object to any development in the vicinity as a matter of course.
- The 2003 date stated on the maps related to the Crown Copyright; the plan had been produced from the Council's current, periodically updated interactive mapping system.

Debate

28. Councillor Paul Kander opened the debate. He acknowledged the validity of the strategic points raised by Councillor Tom McCann but stated the Committee's duty was to determine the application before them. He suggested the wider policy issue should be examined by the Council as a separate matter. For the current application, he considered conditions on hours of operation and lighting to be important due to the proximity of a residential dwelling. With those controls in place, he was minded to support the application.
29. Councillor Richard Somner agreed with Councillor Kander and suggested the Chairman should raise the strategic issue of cumulative development around AWE with the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee. Regarding the application, he noted there was no new physical development. He was content with the emergency shelter arrangements and supported retaining all the proposed conditions, which he felt provided necessary clarity. He supported the officer's recommendation, with the addition of a condition to control lighting.
30. Councillor Jeremy Cottam supported the previous speakers. He suggested that lighting could be controlled with detectors. He argued that as a storage area, the use would not significantly increase employment on the site. He confirmed he was happy to second a motion for approval.
31. Councillor Somner raised a further point regarding the vegetation and earth bank on the northern boundary, which the Parish Council had mentioned. He asked if its retention could be conditioned for screening or safety purposes. Officers confirmed that while it was not raised as a safety issue by the Emergency Planning Officer, a condition requiring the submission of a landscaping scheme to ensure the retention of the trees was possible and could be added if Members wished. Officers confirmed that a lighting condition similar to that on the previous application would be appropriate.
32. Councillor Somner proposed to accept Officer's recommendation and grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the main report and update report. This was seconded by Councillor Cottam
33. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Somner, seconded by Councillor Cottam to grant planning permission. At the vote the motion was carried.

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RESOLVED that the Development Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions in the main report and update report (subject to the following amendments):

Conditions

Within three months of the date of this permission a scheme for any external lighting to be installed on or within Compound A, A1, and A4 shall be submitted in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include a plan to show the location of any lighting, isolux contour diagram(s), an operation strategy (e.g. details of timed operation), and specifications all lighting to ensure that levels are designed within the limitations of Environmental Lighting Zone 1, as described by the Institute of Lighting Engineers. No external lighting shall be installed on or within Compound A, A1, and A4 except in accordance with the above strategy.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the local area. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies SP7, SP8, DM5 and DM30 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.

And

Within three months of the date of this permission a detailed soft landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The soft landscaping scheme shall include detailed plans, planting and retention schedule, programme of works, including the retention of trees along the northern boundary of the Youngs Industrial Estate adjacent to 48-49 Paices Hill, and any other supporting information. All new soft landscaping works shall be completed in accordance with the approved soft landscaping scheme within the first planting season following approval of the landscaping scheme. Any trees, shrubs, plants or hedges planted in accordance with the approved scheme which are removed, die, or become diseased or become seriously damaged within five years of completion of this completion of the approved soft landscaping scheme shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees, shrubs or hedges of a similar size and species to that originally approved.

Reason: Landscaping is an integral element of achieving high quality design, and to protect the amenity of adjoining occupiers. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies SP7, SP8 , SP10, DM5 and DM30 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041, and the Quality Design SPD.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.21 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature