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

WESTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 AUGUST 2026

Councillors Present: Phil Barnett (Chairman), Clive Hooker (Vice-Chairman), Adrian Abbs, Martin Colston, Paul Dick, Denise Gaines, Tony Vickers and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Paul Goddard (Highways Development Control Team Leader), Matthew Shepherd (Interim Team Manager (Development Management)), Jake Brown (Principal Planning Officer), Helen Robertson (Assistant Planning Officer), Sharon Armour (Legal Services Manager), Stephen Chard (Zoom Host), Thomas Radbourne (Clerk)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Nigel Foot

PART I

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2026 will be considered at the next meeting of Western Area Planning Committee on 16 September 2026.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Billy Drummond and Councillor Denise Gaines declared that they had been lobbied on Item 4(3).

Councillor Tony Vickers declared a personal interest in Item 4(2) by virtue of the fact that he was a member of Newbury Town Council Planning and Highways Committee and its Public Rights of Way Committee which had considered the application. He had not attended any meeting where Item 4(2) had been discussed. He indicated that he would consider the application afresh. As his interest was personal and not a prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Phil Barnett declared a personal interest in item 4(2) as he was a member of Newbury Town Council Planning and Highways Committee. He had attended the meeting at which the item was discussed, but he had abstained in the vote and had taken no part in the discussion. As his interest was personal and not a prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

3. Schedule of Planning Applications

(1) 26/00036/MDOPO Street Record, Spring Meadows, Great Shefford

This item was deferred to a future meeting of Western Area Planning Committee.

(2) 26/00854/PIP Land To The Rear Of 13 Woodside Newbury

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(2)) concerning Planning Application 26/00854/PIP in respect of erection of a minimum of 1 single storey dwelling and a maximum 1 single storey dwelling. Land To The Rear Of 13 Woodside, Newbury.

1. Mr Jake Brown 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 in principle subject to the conditions outlined in the main and update reports.
2. The Chairman asked Mr Paul Goddard (Highways Development Control Team Leader) if he had any observations relating to the application. Mr Goddard confirmed that:

- The site benefited from an existing vehicular access, and the proposed dwelling was not considered likely to generate significantly more traffic than the site's historic garage use.
- Any Highways concerns could be addressed through a future Technical Details Consent application.
- No objection was raised by Highways Officers.

3. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr Alistair Douglas, objector, Mr Matt Williams, agent, and Councillor David Marsh, Ward Member addressed the Committee on this application.

Objector Representation

4. Mr Douglas addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed here:

Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Objector

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

- Mr Douglas had lived at the property for approximately 14 years and had never observed regular vehicle use of the access. He stated that occasional maintenance vehicles accessed the area but, in his view, larger construction vehicles would not be able to use the track safely.

Applicant/Agent Representation

6. Mr Williams addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed here:

Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Applicant/Agent

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

- The site had an established planning history involving vehicular access and garage use, which demonstrated that vehicle movements had previously occurred from the site.
- The illustrative drawings had been submitted to demonstrate that a single-storey dwelling could potentially be accommodated on the site. Mr Williams emphasised that the layout shown was illustrative only and was not before the Committee for approval.

Ward Member Representation

8. Councillor Marsh addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed here:

Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Ward Member

9. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Member Questions to Officers

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

- The amenity provision was not a matter that could be considered at the permission in principle (PiP) stage. These matters would be assessed at the technical details consent (TDC) stage.
- Parking layout, turning arrangements and vehicle movements were not matters for consideration at the PiP stage. These issues would be assessed in detail at the TDC stage by the Highway Authority.
- The distance between the proposed development site and the rear elevation of No.14 Woodside was approximately 13m. Officers reiterated that privacy, overlooking, and amenity impacts would be assessed at the TDC stage and were not matters before members at PiP stage.
- The public right of way application was a separate legal process and was not a matter for determination by the Planning Committee when considering the current application.
- The Tree Officer had reviewed the proposals and concluded that it was possible for a dwelling to be accommodated on the site without unacceptable harm to protected trees, subject to suitable tree protection measures and arboriculture controls being secured through any future TDC application.
- Neighbour amenity, including privacy and overlooking, would be material planning considerations at the TDC Stage.
- Part of the site had formerly been used for garages serving nearby dwellings and was therefore considered previously developed land. The historic use demonstrated that vehicular access to the site had previously been accepted and utilised. This was only one factor, and was not the sole basis of the recommendation for approval.
- The applicant would need to submit a TDC application within the prescribed period. If no subsequent application was made within that timeframe, then the PiP would lapse.
- The illustrative drawing was not approved as part of the application and could be amended significantly at the TDC stage. Matters such as house size, orientation, window placement, boundary treatment and obscured glazing could all be considered in a future application. Members were advised to consider the site as a blank canvas at this stage. The illustrative scheme had only been provided to demonstrate one possible way a dwelling might be accommodated on the site.
- Despite the references within the submitted material to a single-storey dwelling, PIP would not restrict the future design. A subsequent TDC application could propose a two- or three-storey dwelling, which would then be assessed on its planning merits.

Debate

11. Councillor Tony Vickers opened the debate. He disagreed with the Officer conclusion that the proposal would not be out of character with the area. He noted that the surrounding estate contained no examples of backland development and argued that the proposal would represent a significant departure from the established pattern of development. He referred to the woodland area between Woodside and Pond Close and considered the site to be an important open area within the estate. He felt that the

proposed development was highly constrained and questioned whether a satisfactory scheme could ultimately be achieved.

12. Councillor Clive Hooker felt it was a challenging application because of the policies set out. It was within the settlement boundary, and in accordance with the new NPPF, and the Council was in need of housing. He expressed concerns regarding the practicalities of developing the site. Referring to the illustrative layout, he questioned how acceptable levels of amenity space, parking provision and neighbour separation could be achieved. While acknowledging that these were matters reserved for the TDC stage, he considered that the submitted illustrative scheme demonstrated the limitations of the site

13. Councillor Adrian Abbs believed that Members were effectively being asked to decide whether a dwelling could realistically and sensibly be accommodated on the site. He acknowledged that the illustrative drawing was not being considered for approval, but he felt it had been submitted as evidence that development could be accommodated. Based on what had been presented, he was not convinced that a suitable form of development could be achieved whilst also meeting the Council's expectations regarding amenity, parking and neighbouring impacts.

14. Councillor Paul Dick acknowledged the concerns which had been raised by local residents, the ward member and Members of the Committee. However, he reminded Members that PIP applications were governed by legislation that restricted consideration to location, land use and amount of development. In his view, many of the concerns raised, including parking, overlooking, drainage and access arrangements, were matters for a future TDC application. He therefore considered that the Committee should determine the application within the limited scope available to it.

15. Members sought clarification from Officers regarding the wording of a potential reason for refusal. Officers suggested that any refusal would need to focus on one of the matters capable of consideration at the PIP stage. A potential refusal reason relating to the character and appearance of the area. Also, the backland nature of the development was discussed.

16. Officers reminded Members that the site was located within the Newbury settlement boundary, that the proposed use was residential, and that the development proposed was a single dwelling. Officers considered the proposal to comply with the relevant policy framework applicable to PIP applications. If permission was granted, all matters relating to design, appearance, layout, amenity, trees, drainage, parking and access would still require detailed assessment through a subsequent TDC application.

17. Councillor Martin Colston had concerns regarding the site and he shared some of the reservations expressed by local residents. However, he felt that the Committee had to determine the application within the legislative framework governing PIP and he accepted that many of the matters causing concern could not be considered at the current stage.

18. Councillor Howard Woollaston commented that the illustrative scheme presented to Members appeared unacceptable in its current form, particularly in relation to overlooking and neighbour relationships. However, he accepted Officer’s advice that the illustrative drawings carried no formal weight and that a future scheme could look substantially different.

19. Councillor Denise Gaines noted that, should PIP be granted, a future TDC application would still need to satisfy all relevant planning policies. She recognised residents'

concerns but accepted that granting Permission in Principle would not automatically mean that a later detailed application would be approved.

20. Councillor Adrian Abbs proposed to reject Officer's recommendation and refuse permission in principle. This was seconded by Councillor Tony Vickers.

21. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Abbs, seconded by Councillor Vickers to refuse planning permission. At the vote the motion was rejected.

22. Councillor Howard Woollaston proposed to accept Officer's recommendation and grant permission in principle subject to the conditions listed in the main report and update report. This was seconded by Councillor Paul Dick

23. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Woollaston, seconded by Councillor Dick to grant permission in principle. At the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Development Manager be authorised to grant permission in principle subject to the conditions listed in the main report and update report.

(3) 26/00858/HOUSE 3 Blake Road Hermitage Thatcham RG18 9WN

1. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(3)) concerning Planning Application 26/00858/HOUSE in respect of loft conversion and insertion of rooflights at 3 Blake Road, Hermitage, Thatcham, RG18 9WN.

2. Mr Jake Brown 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 (Highways Development Control Team Leader) if he had any observations relating to the application.

- Mr Goddard advised that the property currently benefited from two off-street parking spaces. He explained that the dwelling had been approved in 2012, before the Council's current parking standards were adopted, and therefore did not meet the standards that would apply to a new, four-bedroom dwelling today.
- He noted that the loft conversion would increase the property from four to five bedrooms. However, Policy DM44 required larger dwellings to be assessed on an individual basis. Having considered the proposal, the Highway Authority did not consider that the addition of one bedroom would create a significant increase in parking demand or justify a refusal on highway grounds.
- While acknowledging concerns raised by local residents and Hermitage Parish Council regarding parking pressures in the area, he advised that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would result in a severe highway impact. He therefore confirmed that the Local Highway Authority raised no objection to the application and considered that a refusal based solely on parking provision would be difficult to defend at appeal.

4. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Councillor Paul Dick, Parish Council representative, Ms Tracy Seymour and Mr Simon Brookes, objectors, Mr Yuvraj Tandon, applicant, and Councillor Heather Codling, Ward Member, addressed the Committee on this application.

Parish/Town Council Representation

5. Councillor Dick addressed the Committee by reading out a statement on behalf of Hermitage Parish Council. The full representation can be viewed here:

Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Parish/Town Council

6. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Objector Representation

7. Ms Seymour addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed here:

Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Objector

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

- Ms Seymour advised that the garage would be converted into habitable accommodation and connected to the house by a link corridor.
- Ms Seymour advised that no measurements had been provided but that the approved plans showed a reduction in the available parking area.

Applicant Representation

9. Mr Tandon addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed here:

Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Applicant

10. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Ward Member Representation

11. Councillor Codling addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed here:

Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Ward Member

12. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Member Questions to Officers

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

- The approved plans showed two parking spaces that met the Council's adopted standards of 2.4m by 4.8m.
- According to Policy DM44 houses exceeding the bedroom thresholds in the parking standards must be assessed on an individual basis. Officers believed that the increase from four to five bedrooms would not create sufficient parking pressure to justify refusal.
- No evidence had been identified to demonstrate a significant increase in parking demand and therefore no highway objection had been raised.
- The Committee could only determine the application before it and could not revisit the merits of the previously approved scheme.
- Any failure to build in accordance with approved plans would be a matter for Planning Enforcement and so concerns about possible departures from approved plans were not relevant to the determination of the current application.

Debate

14. Councillor Howard Woollaston opened the debate by noting that, taken in isolation, the proposal for six rooflights appeared relatively modest. However, he recognised that concerns remained regarding parking provision and the cumulative impact of development that had taken place or been approved at the property.

15. Councillor Adrian Abbs expressed concern about the increase in the size of the dwelling that would result from the loft conversion. He noted that Members had heard evidence regarding parking constraints and considered that moving from a four-bedroom property to a five-bedroom property could place additional pressure on parking provision. Referring to the discussion regarding parking standards, he observed that this represented a significant increase above the level of development anticipated by the Council's adopted parking policies

16. Councillor Tony Vickers stated that he had initially been minded to support the Officer's recommendation. However, following the site visit and the discussion during the meeting, he remained concerned about the practical functioning of the parking arrangements. He referred to the approved garage conversion scheme and questioned whether the parking spaces would be capable of being used comfortably in practice. He also noted that Hermitage was a location where many residents relied on private cars and therefore parking standards were particularly important. Despite those concerns, he acknowledged that the parking impacts identified might not be sufficient to sustain a refusal at appeal.

17. Councillor Martin Colston emphasised that the Committee could only determine the application before it, namely the insertion of six rooflights. While he understood the concerns regarding the approved garage conversion, he accepted the Officer's advice that the Committee could not revisit or redetermine that separate planning permission. On that basis, he considered there were insufficient planning grounds to justify refusal.

18. Councillor Denise Gaines agreed with the points raised by Councillor Colston. She noted that the Committee was only being asked to consider the rooflights and that the associated internal loft conversion works would not themselves require planning permission. She further observed that had permitted development rights not previously been removed from the property, the rooflights may not have required a planning application at all. She therefore saw little justification for departing from the Officer's recommendation.

19. Councillor Paul Dick referred to comments made during the site visit regarding future building works and potential deviations from approved plans. He noted that concerns of that nature would be matters for Planning Enforcement rather than for the determination of the current application. While he appreciated local concerns, he considered that the Committee should focus on the planning merits of the proposal before it.

20. Councillor Gaines 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 Woollaston.

21. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Gaines, seconded by Councillor Woollaston 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 listed in the main report and update report.

(The meeting commenced at 18:31 and closed at 20:44)

CHAIRMAN …….

Date of Signature …….