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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 16 SEPTEMBER 2026

Councillors Present: Phil Barnett (Chairman), Clive Hooker (Vice-Chairman), Martin Colston, Paul Dick, Nigel Foot, Tony Vickers and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Matthew Shepherd (Interim Team Manager (Development Management)), Lauren Hill (Senior Planning Officer), Sian Cutts (Interim Principal Planning Officer), Sarah House (Principal Lawyer), Paul Goddard (Highways Development Control Team Leader), Thomas Radbourne (Clerk), and Gordon Oliver (Zoom Host)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Adrian Abbs and Councillor Denise Gaines

PART I

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2026 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2026 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 2026 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Billy Drummond and Tony Vickers declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4(2) by virtue of the fact that they were members of Newbury Town Council. As their interest was a personal and not prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillors Phil Barnett and Nigel Foot declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4(2) by virtue of the fact that they were members of Newbury Town Council's Planning and Highways Committee. As their interest was a personal and not prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Nigel Foot declared an interest in Agenda Item 4(2) by virtue of the fact that he was the Ward Member for the site. As his interest was personal and not 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) 26/00555/REG3 Former Old Peoples Home, Chestnut Walk, Hungerford

1. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(1)) concerning Planning Application 26/00555/REG3 in respect of Proposed change of use from Class C2
2. (Residential Institution) to Class C1 (Hotel/Hostel) to provide supported temporary accommodation with onsite management and security measures.
3. Construction of new Air source heat pump compound and cycle store. Relocation of bin store, Former Old Peoples Home, Chestnut Walk, Hungerford.
4. Ms Lauren Hill (Senior Planning Officer) 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.
5. The Chairman asked Mr Paul Goddard (Highways Development Control Team Leader) if he had any observations relating to the application.

- Mr Goddard noted that while there was local concern regarding parking congestion, especially on football match days, the proposal would retain the three existing car parking spaces, including one accessible space. He advised the committee that the change of use would not worsen existing parking stress. Based on consultations with Housing colleagues, homeless residents had very low car ownership rates. Additionally, staff levels for a homeless refuge would be lower than those for a care home, which would result in fewer visitors, less overall traffic, and reduced parking demand, representing a net improvement over the site's previoususe.
- Highways Officers raised no objection to the application.

6. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Ms Sue Terry and Mr James Cole Town Council representatives, Mr Nick Caprara, Applicant, and Councillor Denise Gaines, ward member, addressed the Committee on this application.

Town Council Representation

7. Ms Terry and Mr Cole addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed here:

   Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Town Council

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

- The Hungerford Neighbourhood Development Plan did not specifically provide for temporary accommodation of this nature. The Town Council considered permanent family accommodation to be a more appropriate use for the site.
- Future occupiers may need to travel significant distances to maintain support networks, employment opportunities and school placements and therefore additional vehicle ownership could not be ruled out. The Town Council did not consider that the parking implications had been adequately evidenced.

- A smaller number of family units would be more appropriate, potentially providing four or five family units with greater levels of support and reduced intensity of occupation.
- Concerns regarding the character of the building related to the nature of the use and the introduction a more transient population into an established residential area.

Applicant Representation

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

Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Applicant

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

- Placements to the property would be made based on housing need and the Council's statutory duties. While some residents might have local connections to Hungerford, this could not be guaranteed.
- Location formed part of the Council's assessment when determining whether accommodation was suitable and reasonable.
- The flexible layout would allow the Council to accommodate larger families, couples or individual occupants depending on demand.
- There had been no increase in anti-social behaviour at a similar provision at Walnut Close. Mr Caprara explained that where issues had arisen, they had been managed in partnership with Housing Services, Social Care teams and Thames Valley Police.
- Direct comparisons were difficult due to the shared nature of parking provision at Walnut Close but Mr Caprara stated that homelessness was generally associated with low vehicle ownership and that he considered three parking spaces to be sufficient.
- The proposal reflected both the identified demand for temporary accommodation and the opportunity presented by the existence of a vacant Council-owned building.
- Housing Officers would be based on site during working hours and security provision would operate outside those hours. Following consultation responses, security provision had been strengthened to provide 24-hour coverage. CCTV would monitor entrances and exits while regular patrols would be undertaken by staff and security personnel.

Ward Member Representation

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

Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Ward Member

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

- Councillor Gaines explained that she had received legal advice and had elected to address the Committee solely in her capacity as Ward Member. She confirmed that she had not participated in the Committee's consideration of the application.
- The internal layout provided flexibility to accommodate families, couples, and individual occupants. Family accommodation could be configured as separate units

where required and all prospective residents would be subject to the Council's standard assessment procedures.

Member Questions to Officers

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

- Officers advised that the housing policies within the Neighbourhood Development Plan primarily related to permanent residential development rather than temporary accommodation. Officers therefore considered that the proposal accorded with the wider objective of meeting identified housing needs.
- Thames Valley Police had not objected to the principle of the development but had requested further details relating to security measures, access arrangements and CCTV provision. Officers considered that these matters could be addressed through planning conditions.
- Operational management arrangements and the detailed mix of occupants were not material planning considerations. The Committee was required to determine the acceptability of the proposed land use.
- On a question regarding whether a condition could require Thames Valley Police to be satisfied with the final security arrangements, Officers advised that such a condition would lack precision. However, several proposed conditions required details to be submitted and would involve consultation with Thames Valley Police at the discharge of conditions stage.
- Officers clarified that a separate planning application would be required if the building was to be used as a House in Multiple Occupation in the future.

Debate

14. Councillor Tony Vickers opened the debate by noting it was an interesting application. He lived in a mixed community on the edge of Newbury, and believed change must be accepted regarding changes of neighbours. He would rather not live next to a vacant site for 10 years. He considered the application to be sound and he expressed sympathy that the Town Council felt that they had not been consulted. He was happy with the site and the land being reused along with the structure. He felt that embedded carbon in any building should be reused. There was a need to manage the temporary housing of people. He considered that many of the concerns raised related to operational matters rather than planning issues.

15. Councillor Paul Dick explained that his earlier questions had been framed in the context of concerns that might be raised by local residents and that the responses provided by officers and the applicant had satisfied him on those points. He believed that the evidence presented during the meeting had demonstrated a clear and significant need for temporary accommodation within West Berkshire and that the proposal appeared well-suited to meeting that need. He considered the existing building to be an appropriate asset to facilitate the Council's housing responsibilities and believed the proposal represented a practical and sensible use of the site.

16. Councillor Howard Woollaston stated that when he had been the Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing under the previous administration, various alternative options for the building had been explored unsuccessfully, leaving the property vacant. The building had remained unused for a considerable period and required a viable long-term purpose. As the Council's Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing, he was acutely aware of the increasing demand for accommodation across the district and

considered the proposal to offer an effective means of addressing part of that need. He observed that a managed, occupied building was preferable to one that remained vacant and vulnerable to vandalism and anti-social behaviour. He considered that the proposed management arrangements and security measures would provide an appropriate level of oversight and benefit both future residents and the wider community.

17. Councillor Dick 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 Vickers.

18. Officers noted that Conditions 8, 9, 10 and 13, would be discharged in consultation with Thames Valley Police.

19. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Paul Dick, seconded by Councillor Tony Vickers 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 outlined in the main and update reports.

(2) 25/01863/FULMAJ & 25/01864/LBC Newbury Manor Hotel London Road Newbury RG14 2BY

1. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(2)) concerning Planning Application 25/01863/FULMAJ & 25/01864/LBC in respect of Proposed removal of modern hotel extensions to the listed building Newbury Manor; removal of Millwaters Cottage. Restoration of Newbury Manor and conversion to two semidetached homes. Erection of 23 new dwellings including roadways, and turning areas (providing a total of 25 dwellings overall). Car and cycle parking; landscaping; energy enhancements; and biodiversity gains. Newbury Manor Hotel London Road Newbury RG14 2BY.

2. Ms Sian Cutts (Principal Planning Officer) 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:

- Highway assessments demonstrated that the proposed residential development would generate fewer vehicle movements than the previously authorised uses, particularly during evening peak periods.
- The development would utilise the existing access onto the A4. The access already incorporated a right-turn lane and was considered suitable in highway safety terms. Alternative access arrangements had been investigated during the application process, however these were discounted due to conflicts with nearby junctions, existing right-turn facilities and protected trees.
- Members were advised that the internal road layout complied with the Council's design standards and was capable of adoption as public highway.
- The scheme complied with parking standards and cycle parking requirements.
- As part of the Section 106 Agreement, a strip of land along the northern boundary would be secured to facilitate future widening and improvement of the adjacent

cycleway/footway corridor. This would improve conditions for active travel along the A4 frontage.

- The Highways Authority had no objections to the proposal.

4. The Chairman asked Mr Paul Bacchus (Principal Engineer) if he had any observations relating to the application.

- Mr Bacchus reported that the application had undergone extensive discussion and negotiation owing to the site's complex flood risk characteristics.
- During pre-application and application stages, concerns had arisen regarding the accuracy of the topographical information initially submitted. Additional survey information had subsequently been provided and verified. This refined information demonstrated that Flood Zone 2 extended more extensively across the site than indicated on standard Environment Agency mapping.
- The revised flood risk modelling and topographical evidence had been reviewed and accepted both by the Local Lead Flood Authority and the Environment Agency.
- Members were advised that significant discussion had also taken place concerning the ownership, operation and maintenance of flood risk infrastructure associated with the site, including the weir and sluice gate structures. Those assets influenced local flood risk and their ongoing maintenance was considered essential.
- Considerable effort had been undertaken to establish responsibility for these structures and clarify misconceptions regarding whether responsibility lay with the Environment Agency or landowners. Officers concluded that the relevant landowners and future managers would be responsible for maintenance.
- A planning condition had therefore been submitted requiring full details of ownership, management arrangements, maintenance responsibilities and future operators of all relevant flood risk infrastructure.
- In terms of surface water drainage, the density and constraints of the site limited drainage opportunities. Nevertheless, a broadly compliant drainage strategy had been developed. Detailed design work remained necessary, but this could be secured by condition.
- The Local Lead Flood Authority was satisfied that subject to these conditions the final drainage solution could achieve compliance with national Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) standards, planning guidance and flood risk requirements.
- Accordingly, the Local Lead Flood Authority raised no objection.

5. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr Andy Moore, Town Council representative, Mr Nik Lyzba, Mr Nick Hardy, and Mr Gary Tully, Agents, and Councillor Nigel Foot, Ward Member, addressed the Committee on this application.

Town Council Representation

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

Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Parish/Town Council

7. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Applicant/Agent Representation

8. Mr Lyzba addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed here:

   Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Applicant/Agent

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

   - Mr Lyzba explained that demolition of the Cottage was primarily required for viability and site layout reasons. He stated that heritage investigations concluded that the building's historic significance was limited. The eastern and southern walls were understood to be the principal surviving historic elements, with substantial modern alteration and extension elsewhere. The building was not individually listed but derived protection from its curtilage-listed status.
   - The applicant's heritage consultants concluded that the building retained limited historic value and that its removal represented a necessary compromise to facilitate comprehensive restoration of the wider site and listed manor house.

Ward Member Representation

10. Councillor Foot addressed the Committee and summarised comments on behalf of Councillor Stuart Gourley. The full representation can be viewed here:

    Western Area Planning Committee - Recording

Member Questions to the Ward Member

11. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Member Questions to Officers

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

    - Officers explained that various access options, including alternative locations and left-in/left-out arrangements, had been assessed. Following detailed assessment, retention of the existing access was considered the safest and most practical solution.
    - Regarding a query on the interaction between the site access and adjacent cycling infrastructure, the Highways Authority remained satisfied with the arrangements and noted that future widening of the cycle route would be secured through the Section 106 Agreement
    - It was confirmed that a management company would oversee communal areas, and maintenance responsibilities for flood risk infrastructure would be secured through planning conditions.
    - Officers noted that access for future maintenance of river structures had been safeguarded.
    - Ownership and management arrangements would need to be formally identified and approved before development commenced.
    - Additional management measures relating to safety around watercourses could be considered through management arrangements.
    - Officers explained that viability constraints required prioritisation between contributions and that the healthcare contributions sought by the Integrated Care Board would support additional capacity at Strawberry Hill Surgery or another appropriate local healthcare project.

Debate

13. Councillor Martin Colston opened the debate by noting that he was disappointed regarding the absence of policy-compliant affordable housing provision and the non-compliant housing mix. However, having heard the detailed technical evidence, he was satisfied that flood risk matters had been appropriately addressed. He considered the heritage benefits to be substantial and welcomed the restoration of a prominent listed building that had remained vacant and deteriorating for many years.
14. Councillor Tony Vickers highlighted that his initial concerns had largely related to long-term management responsibilities, flood infrastructure and public safety. Having received assurances regarding management arrangements and planning controls, he was reassured. He commented favourably on the quality of the architecture and design, describing the proposal as imaginative and well-suited to the site. Whilst acknowledging that the homes would be unlikely to be affordable, he accepted that viability considerations had influenced the scheme and considered redevelopment preferable to the continued deterioration of the site.
15. Councillor Paul Dick stated that he was satisfied with the explanations provided by officers, particularly in relation to flooding and future management arrangements. He did not support introducing river fencing, noting that rivers and canals across Newbury were generally not fenced and that such an approach could appear inappropriate in this setting. He noted that the conditions and Section 106 obligations had been amended through the update report and confirmed that he did not consider any additional conditions to be necessary.
16. Councillor Billy Drummond remarked that he liked the design of the scheme and welcomed the inclusion of solar panels. Whilst he continued to have reservations regarding vehicles turning right from the site onto the A4, he accepted the professional advice provided by the Highways Authority and indicated that he would support the proposal.
17. Councillor Paul Dick proposed to accept Officer's recommendation and grant listed building consent and planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the main reports and update reports. This was seconded by Councillor Billy Drummond.
18. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Paul Dick and seconded by Councillor Billy Drummond to grant listed building consent and planning permission. At the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Development Manager be authorised to grant listed building consent and planning permission for 25/01864/LBC & 25/01863/FULMAJ subject to the conditions outlined in the main and update reports.

(The meeting commenced at 18:30 and closed at 21:14)

CHAIRMAN …….

Date of Signature …….