

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 10 DECEMBER 2025

Councillors Present: Alan Macro (Chairman), Jeremy Cottam, Paul Kander, Geoff Mayes, Justin Pemberton and Clive Taylor

Also Present: Simon Till (Team Manager – Development Management), Michael Butler (Principal Planning Officer), Clare Say (Principal Lawyer), Paul Goddard (Highways Development Control Team Leader), Sam Chiverton (Host), Thomas Radbourne (Clerk)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Richard Somner, Councillor Ross Mackinnon and Councillor Vicky Poole

PART I

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 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) 24/02051/FUL James Farm Burghfield

1. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(1)) concerning Planning Application 24/02051/FUL in respect of a retrospective planning application for change of use to B8 storage, including the positioning of personal storage containers at the site compound to the rear of James Farm, James Lane, Grazeley Green, RG7 1NB
2. Michael Butler 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. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr Jim Thompson, Parish Council representative, Mr Roger Prescott, agent, Councillor Nick Carter, Ward Member, addressed the Committee on this application.

Parish/Town Council Representation

4. Mr Thompson addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Parish/Town Council

5. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

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Agent Representation

6. Mr Prescott addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Agent

7. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
- The additional units would support local businesses and people living and working locally. There were 12 people working in the business who handled bookings and reservations for the site.
 - Once the site was fully established, there would be no movement of containers unless there was rapid deterioration. The containers on the site were constructed from steel and less than five years old with a projected lifespan of 25-30 years.
 - In terms of capacity of the site, no further containers could reasonably be added, and there was no scope for significant expansion.
 - Regarding the condition to monitor and limit the amount of commercial usage of the site to 30%, Now Storage would analyse the activities of their clients to determine the proportion of business users. However, they would need to take clients at their word, regarding their status. Now Storage would work with the Council to deliver this condition in an efficient and effective way.
 - The applicant had provided details of how 7.5 tonne rigid vehicles could access the site. The applicant was unaware of any weight restrictions on the site, however, the applicant had monitored the vehicular movements by visitors, and no HGVs had been used to deposit or collect goods.

Ward Member Representation

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

Member Questions to the Ward Member

9. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
- He had previously objected to the September 2024 application for the site, which had been approved.

Member Questions to Officers

10. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
- Officers advised that the planning committee should not refuse planning permission due to concerns about the practicality of enforcing a condition due to the likely availability of staff resources. Instead, Members should consider whether the condition could be enforced. Officers confirmed that a Planning Inspector would not resile from applying a condition purely because it would be impractical for the local planning authority to take enforcement measures.
 - Officers indicated that the 30% commercial limit was a condition of a usual form, although it was normally applied to floorspace within a building. In terms of enforcing this condition, it was suggested that the operator could establish a register of the people using the units, and an enforcement officer could check the register against the units recorded in that register. While it was a difficult condition to enforce, officers did not consider the condition to be unreasonable and it met all the relevant tests, including enforceability.

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- Officers indicated that they would request Planning Enforcement Officers to liaise with the operators of the site and ensure that any inaccurate signage was amended, irrespective of the determination of this planning application.
- Officers highlighted that traffic surveys were undertaken in June 2024 when the site was only 78% occupied, and the results showed 8 vehicle movements per day. Officers noted that a number of similar applications previously seen by the Committee, also had very low levels of traffic generation. As most of the storage area was for domestic use, it would be likely that customers would not access the site for significant periods of time. The projected vehicle movements were 12 per day.
- Officers noted that if the application was approved, opening times would be consistent with those already approved on the site.
- Officers indicated that power and utilities were not usually planning matters, they were operational matters for the applicant. Electricity would not be provided to the storage containers, and they could not be used as workshops. The application was for B8 storage, and if any B1 or B2 uses occurred on site, that would be a contravention of the planning permission, and the Council would take action. Officers felt that this did not need to be conditioned because it was inherent in the approved plan description.
- Officers noted that the Ecology Officer had looked specifically at the external lighting, as there were bats in the area, and was satisfied with the proposal.
- Officers noted that an electric vehicle charging point could be conditioned.

Debate

10. Councillor Jeremy Cottam opened the debate by expressing concern at placing a large number of containers in the countryside. He believed that it was a sensitive site where light should be projected carefully, and indicated that he would like to see a condition to ensure the development met the Council's dark skies requirement. He was pleased that a traffic survey was included in the report. He felt that the economic side of the application should be considered - there was an increasing need for storage facilities. While he was not totally happy with the proposal, he felt that officers had undertaken a lot of work in response to complaints received.
11. Councillor Justin Pemberton shared the concerns raised by Councillor Cottam and noted the increasing number of applications for storage containers. He felt that flexible storage was increasingly important to residents and local businesses. There were environmental benefits as local customers would make fewer trips and travel less distance. The traffic impact of the application would be low, as there were few daily vehicle movements. He noted the concerns raised by residents in previous applications, however, he highlighted that there had been few complaints raised about the current use of the site. He indicated that he was supportive of this application and was happy to approve it with the addition of an electric vehicle charging point.
12. Councillor Clive Taylor agreed with the points raised by Councillor Pemberton and Councillor Cottam. He felt that the site was not pretty, but the majority of the site was already in use, it was supporting small businesses, and created a small number of jobs. He indicated that he was supportive of the application.
13. Councillor Jeremy Cottam proposed to accept the Officer's recommendation and grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the main report and update report, with additional conditions requiring the provision of an electric vehicle

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charging point, and measures to ensure compliance with the Council's dark skies policy. This was seconded by Councillor Paul Kander.

14. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Jeremy Cottam, seconded by Councillor Paul Kander 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

8. Within 2 months of the date of this decision details of an electric vehicle charging point including a schedule for implementation will be submitted to the LPA for approval. Once approved the ev point must be implemented on site within 2 months of that approval date to the satisfaction of the LPA.

Reason. To ensure that an ev point is placed on site in accord with the advice in policy DM44 of the WBLPR of 2023 to 2041.

9. Within 2 months of the date of this decision a schedule of all external lighting currently provided or proposed to be provided on the site shall be submitted and approved by the LPA. No external lighting except in accordance with the approved schedule shall be erected on the site.

Reason. To protect dark skies in accord with the advice in policy DM5 [f] of the WBLPR of 2023 to 2041.

4. 25/00234/FUL Land South of The Rancher, Manor Farm, Tidmarsh

15. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(2)) concerning Planning Application 25/00234/FUL in respect of erection of an agricultural barn and access track on Land South of The Rancher, Manor Farm, Tidmarsh.

16. Michael Butler 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.

17. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr Edward Mather, agent, and Councillor Matthew Shakespeare, Ward Member, addressed the Committee on this application.

Agent Representation

18. Mr Mather addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Agent

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

- It was proposed to have a small free-range operation of approximately 6 pigs.
- The central part of the barn was essentially a void where larger machinery such as tractors would be stored, with a lowered ceiling for fertiliser and stores on either side of the central taller space.

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- There would be no change to the agricultural activity on the site, with hay and other smallholding operations taking place. The new facility would enable the applicant to store the relevant equipment onsite.
- The agricultural report set out clearly the precise machinery required for the hay operations and calculated how much space would be required in the hay store. The hay store had been thoroughly rationalised based on previous use and the intended future use.
- Local equestrian owners nearby would purchase the hay - it would not be a retail organisation.

Ward Member Representation

20. Councillor Shakespeare addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording:

[Eastern Area Planning Committee – Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Ward Member

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

- The Ward Member believed that ownership of the property had changed in the previous three to four years.
- Officers advised that notwithstanding the comments made by the ward member, the Committee must be careful to look at the merits of the application, and not the personal merits of the applicant. If the permission was to be granted, the applicant would be within his rights to sell the property at any point. The enforcement history can be in some circumstances a material planning consideration. However, on this application, the land use merits of the application had been considered by officers and the application was recommended for approval. Members could refuse the application but must not do so on the personal demerits or merits of the applicant, as this would leave the committee open to criticism.

Member Questions to Officers

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

- Regarding the raising of pigs and the need for 24 to 48 hour care required by the 2006 Animal Welfare Act, the occupation and use of a building for residential purposes was different to the use of a building for a temporary period for activities ancillary to the business on the site. It would be down to the reasons for the occupation being suitable to be ancillary to the activities on site. Occupation of a residential dwelling would be 24/7 with activities of a residential nature taking place throughout the year. There was a well-established set of tests within planning law in terms of how a person would go about evidencing a change of use in that manner. That level of ancillary residential use which would be associated with the business would not be something that would concern the LPA.
- Officers felt that in all likelihood the nature of sale of hay would not be a traditional retail operation, it would be an ancillary factor of baling hay on site and would be a typical activity for a farm in operation on a site such as this. Given the detail provided in the agricultural consultant's report and that historically baling hay had been a primary use of this site over recent years, officers were content that it would not be a retail use, but would be an ancillary agricultural use.

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Debate

23. Councillor Jeremy Cottam opened the debate by noting that the applicant would be likely to buy piglets and raise them rather than breeding them on site. He questioned the economic viability of the proposal, particularly the proposed reduction in the number of tractors from three to one
24. Officers stated that Members should consider whether the details that they have been presented with indicate that the building would be necessary to assist with the viable operation of a farm business. Members should not take account of the business practices that may or may not be employed by the applicant. The applicant's decision to buy, rent, or borrow a tractor was not a material planning consideration. It was only whether there will be a necessity to provide tractor storage for the operations that are proposed on the site.
25. Councillor Paul Kander felt that it was a simple application. Taking the application on its merits, he noted it was a farm that had use for tractors and suggested that if it had not been called in, then it would not have come to committee. He indicated that he was supportive of the application.
26. Councillor Justin Pemberton agreed with the points made by Councillor Kander, and noted the concerns raised by the Ward Member and the history of actions of the site. He felt that there had been little discussion regarding the impact of the building on the local landscape, which he believed would be minimal, taking into consideration the barn's height, scale, and appearance. He indicated that he was in favour of the application.
27. Councillor Clive Taylor agreed with the points raised by Councillor Kander and Councillor Pemberton. Although he had been disturbed by some of the objectors' comment on the portal, on balance, he was in favour of the application.
28. Councillor Justin Pemberton proposed to accept the Officer's recommendation and grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the main report and update. This was seconded by Councillor Paul Kander.
29. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Justin Pemberton, seconded by Councillor Paul Kander 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

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.23 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature