Appendix E

Existing Planning Committee Arrangements

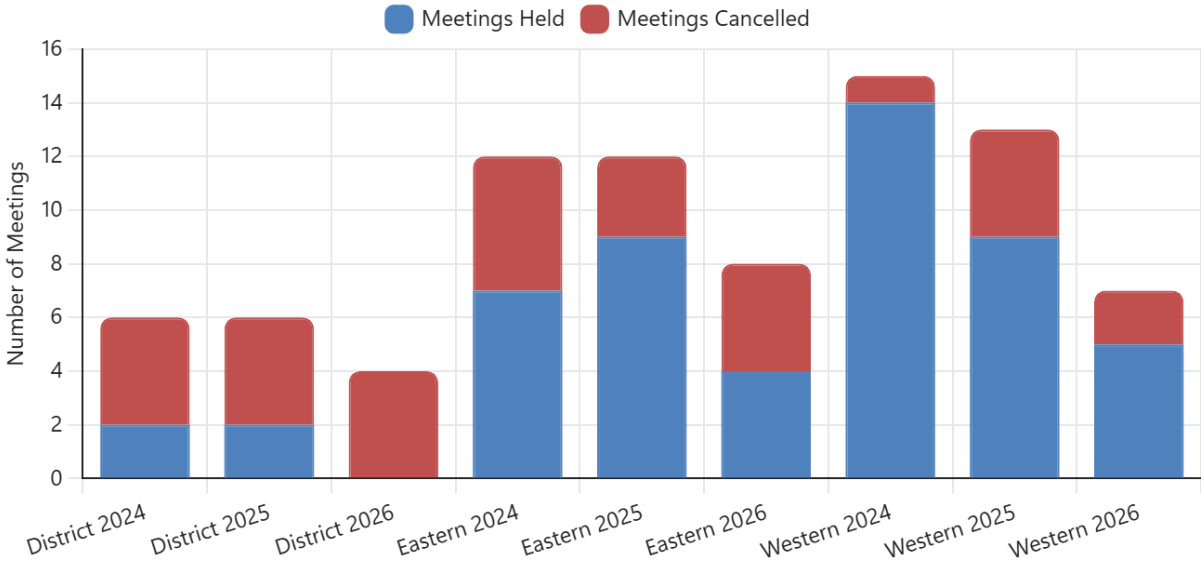
1. The Council currently has three planning committees, with the following responsibilities.

Committee	Terms of Reference (summarised)
Eastern Area Planning Committee (EAPC)	Consider planning applications and other Development Management casework where the Scheme of Delegation requires a committee decision for application sites within the following Wards: • Aldermaston; • Basildon; • Bradfield; • Bucklebury; • Burghfield and Mortimer; • Pangbourne; • Thatcham Central; • Thatcham Colthrop and Crookham; • Thatcham North East; • Thatcham West; • Theale; • Tilehurst Birch Copse; • Tilehurst South and Holybrook; • Tilehurst and Purley.
Western Area Planning Committee (WAPC)	Consider planning applications and other Development Management casework where the Scheme of Delegation requires a committee decision for application sites within the following Wards: • Chieveley and Cold Ash; • Downlands; • Hungerford and Kintbury; • Lambourn; • Newbury Central; • Newbury Clay Hill; • Newbury Greenham; • Newbury Speen; • Newbury Wash Common; • Ridgeway.

District Planning Committee (DPC)	Consider planning applications and other Development Management casework where:
	• The Chairman of an Area Planning Committee determines it is appropriate for the decision to be made by DPC rather than the Area Planning Committee.
	• An Area Planning Committee has referred the application to the District Planning Committee for determination.
	• An Area Planning Committee has considered the application but the Service Director or Service Lead with responsibility for Planning, or the Development Manager, has determined that the decision:
	  ○ has a possible conflict with a policy that would undermine the Development Plan; or
	  ○ is of a district wide public interest; or
	  ○ there is a possibility for claims for significant costs against the Council.
	Where a decision of an Area Planning Committee has been referred to DPC, that decision shall not take effect until the DPC has considered it.

2. The table below sets out the business considered by each of the committees over the past three years.

Committee	Year	Meetings Held	Meetings Cancelled	Total Items Considered	Average Items per Held Meeting
District	2024	2	4	2	1.00
	2025	2	4	2	1.00
	2026	0	4	0	N/A
Eastern	2024	7	5	14	2.00
	2025	9	3	15	1.67
	2026	4	4	7	1.75
Western	2024	14	1	40	2.86
	2025	9	4	19	2.11
	2026	5	2	12	2.40



3. The above data shows:
    a. WAPC had the highest number of meetings held across the last three years, particularly in 2024 (14 meetings held, 1 cancelled).
    b. EAPC maintained a relatively consistent programme, although cancellations increased in some years.
    c. DPC has a very high cancellation rate relative to meetings held, with no held meetings recorded in 2026 to date.

4. Of the applications considered at planning committee meetings between 2024 and 2026, some 30 applications would be Schedule 1 applications and therefore delegated decisions under the National Scheme of Delegation.

5. Between 2019 and 2026, 85% (142 of 168) of WAPC applications, and 77% (83 of 108) of EAPC applications have been decided by committee in accordance with officer recommendation.

6. By way of comparison with other councils, a Planning Advisory Service (PAS) national survey of planning committees, undertaken across more than 120 English councils in 2024/25. PAS reported that:

a. around 75% of responding councils have a single planning committee, meet monthly, have 4 or fewer items per meeting, and meetings typically last less than 3 hours.
b. 79% of councils have just a single committee and when they have more than one then this is very often a Strategic Developments Committee (51%).
c. Over half (around 53%) of Planning Committees have 9-12 members. Outliers included one council with 23 members and another with only 5 members.
d. Most councils (85%) have monthly meetings, most of these meetings are between 1 and 3 hours in duration and usually have been 2 and 4 items in total.