



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** will be held
David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40
1BN on **WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2025 AT 7.00 PM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 3 June 2025

Note: Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in accordance with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams please contact Democratic Services: Democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk

The meeting can also be watched live using the following link:
<https://youtube.com/live/I32itrzacJU?feature=share>

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Our Vision

A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business

Enriching Lives

- Champion excellent education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to enable healthy choices for everyone.
- Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

Providing Safe and Strong Communities

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care.
- Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish.
- Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.

Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough

- Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future.
- Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy.
- Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, to support and enable our Borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.

Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion and minimise delays and disruptions.
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the Borough with good transport infrastructure.
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.

Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers.
- Communicate better with customers, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.
- Drive innovative, digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

Be the Best We Can Be

- Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice.
- Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working.
- Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business.
- Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient.
- Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough.
- Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Councillors

Carol Jewell
Greg Bello
Stuart Munro

Martijn Andrea
Catherine Glover
Caroline Smith

Sam Akhtar
Moses Iyengunmwena
Wayne Smith

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
1.	Non-specific	ELECTION OF CHAIR 2025-26 To elect a Chair for the 2025-26 municipal year.	
2.	Non-specific	APPOINTMENT VICE CHAIR 2025-26 To appoint a Vice Chair for the 2025-26 municipal year.	
3.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
4.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 May 2025.	5 - 10
5.		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declaration of interest	
6.		APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS To consider any recommendations to defer applications from the schedule and to note any applications that may have been withdrawn.	
7.	Spencers Wood & Swallowfield	APPLICATION NO 241861 LAND AT CHURCH LANE AND HYDE END ROAD, SPENCERS WOOD AND THREE MILE CROSS, READING, RG7 1HB RECOMMENDATION: Conditional Approval. Case Officer: Abi Peacock	11 - 60

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following abbreviations were used in the above Index and in reports.

C/A	Conditional Approval (grant planning permission)
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy

R	Refuse (planning permission)
LB	(application for) Listed Building Consent
S106	Section 106 legal agreement between Council and applicant in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
F	(application for) Full Planning Permission
MU	Members' Update circulated at the meeting
RM	Reserved Matters not approved when Outline Permission previously granted
VAR	Variation of a condition/conditions attached to a previous approval
PS	
Category	Performance Statistic Code for the Planning Application

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 MAY 2025 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.15 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Carol Jewell (Chair), Martijn Andrea (Vice-Chair), Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Sam Akhtar, Greg Bello, Moses Iyengunmwena, Stuart Munro, Andy NG Siu-hong and Wayne Smith

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Katrin Harding

Officers Present

Rachel Lucas, Legal
Madeleine Shopland, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Brian Conlon, Operational Lead - Development Management

Case Officers Present

Mark Croucher
James Fuller

51. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

52. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 March 2025 and the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 30 April 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

53. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Wayne Smith declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest in item 55 Application No 250452 GTO House Floral Mile Bath Road Hare Hatch Wokingham RG10 9ES, on the grounds that he would be speaking in support of the application as a Ward Member. He did not participate in the debate or vote on the item.

54. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no items to be withdrawn or deferred.

55. APPLICATION NO 250452 GTO HOUSE FLORAL MILE BATH ROAD HARE HATCH WOKINGHAM RG10 9ES

Councillor Smith did not participate in the debate of or vote on this application.

Proposal: Full application for proposed erection of a workshop including associated storage, landscaping and hardstanding, following the demolition of existing building.

Applicant: GTO Engineering

The Committee considered a report on this application, set out in agenda pages 13 to 44.

The Committee was advised of the following updates:

- Clarification that the proposed number of parking spaces would be 59 and not 56.

- Councillors' attention was drawn to the greenbelt threshold. The application was considered to fall significantly short of the threshold of causing substantial harm to the openness of the green belt.

James Crossland, applicant, spoke in support of the application. He spoke about the business' ties with the Holt School who had sent a student for work experience recently, and the local community. GTO Engineering were committed to providing a pleasant space for their employees, and to growing a sustainable, long-term business, supporting the local economy.

Wayne Smith, Ward Member, spoke in support of the application. He highlighted that no objections had been received, excepting a request from Highways for further information on parking, which had now been provided. Councillor Smith emphasised that there would not be a negative impact to the street scene or green gap. He highlighted that the application would benefit the local economy.

In response to a question from Councillor Shepherd-Dubey regarding pollution, Mark Croucher, Case Officer, stated that the nearest neighbouring residential property was 120m away and that activity would be confined within the buildings.

Councillor Akhtar commented that he was impressed with the design. His initial concerns regarding street scene had been allayed as the proposed workshop would sit behind the main building.

It was proposed by Councillor Akhtar and seconded by Councillor Munro that the application be approved.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) planning permission for application 250452 be granted subject to the following:
 - a) Completion of a legal agreement relating to the following head of terms: 1. Employment Skills Plan. (subject to such additional, updated obligations or conditions (if any) as agreed by officers on behalf of the Assistant Director – Place and Growth) and conditions and informatics set out in pages 24 to 28 of the report.
 - b) Alternative recommendation: That the Planning Committee authorise the Head of Development Management to refusal planning permission in the event that: 1. A S106 legal agreement satisfactory to officers (on behalf of the Assistant Director – Place and Growth) is not completed.

56. APPLICATION NO 250407 LAND SOUTH OF OAK TREE WAINGELS ROAD CHARVIL

Proposal: Permission in principle application for a residential development comprising the erection of a minimum and a maximum of 9 dwellings.

Applicant: Edward Mather

The Committee considered a report on this application, set out in agenda pages 45 to 76.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the supplementary agenda included:

- Summary of four consultation responses from neighbouring residents;
- Clarification regarding the extent of land ownership and accuracy of the red line plan.

James Fuller, Case Officer, explained that a permission in principle application was an alternative means of obtaining planning permission for housing lead development and separated the consideration of matters of principle for the proposed development from the technical details. He went on to highlight that the process had two stages, the first establishing whether a site was suitable in principle, and the second, the assessment of the detailed development proposals. The Committee was informed that the scope of a permission in principle was limited to location, land use and amount of development.

Lee Cripps, Charvil Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application. He commented that attempts to install main sewerage in the vicinity of Charvil and Waingels Road over many years, had so far been unsuccessful. He questioned if another 9 houses would be expected to have septic tanks. Any overflow from these would drain towards Ashenbury Lake. He went on to refer to density of housing. Many of the existing houses on Waingels Road were on 1 to 1.5 acre plots, whereas the application proposed 9 houses on 2.3 acres. He indicated that the density was less favourable than the recently approved application for 75 homes elsewhere in Charvil, and was of the view that the applicant was looking to shoehorn houses into an inappropriate space. Lee Cripps spoke about transport and sustainability and argued that it was not a sustainable transport location. Residents did not use public transport for reasons including poor service, distance to the bus stops and inadequate pavements on Waingels Road. Additional homes would also lead to more cars on the roads. The need for a single lane access road with traffic controls was highlighted. Finally, Lee Cripps indicated that Ashenbury Park in which the site would sit had previously been a landfill site, so contaminated land was a possibility. The Parish Council accepted that there was a need for more housing in the Borough but felt that this application was not appropriate.

Jim Gillett, resident, spoke in objection to the application. He spoke regarding context and emphasised that the 9 houses would not be infilling and were not in context. A new building line would be created, and the houses would not be similar to existing properties. He noted that a house built recently had been built on a 1.5 acre plot. Jim Gillett expressed concerns regarding pollution and explained that the site would be built on reclaimed land. There had been no information to suggest that testing had been carried out and there were existing issues around leaching in the area. The 9 properties were unlikely to have mains drainage and therefore the use of septic tanks and soakaways would be required. He was of the view that allowing the application would not be good planning practice.

Adam Constantinou, agent, spoke in support of the application. He reminded the Committee that they could only consider land use, location, and quantum at this stage. He emphasised that Waingels Road had been judged to be a sustainable location by the Planning Inspectorate in recent decisions, and also by officers. Waingels Road was within walking and cycling distance of facilities in Woodley and Charvil. With regards to land use, the application site would be a logical, well enclosed addition rather than an isolated development, being naturally contained by existing residential development and landscaping. Adam Constantinou stated that 9 properties could comfortably be accommodated. In addition, the site would provide much needed housing in the Borough.

Katrin Harding, Ward Member, spoke in objection of the application. She explained that the site was within designated countryside and as such policy CP11 would be contravened. A new line of development would be introduced between Woodley and Charvil. She commented that the proposed density was much greater than surrounding properties, creating an inappropriate contrast with the character of the area. This raised concerns regarding the quantum of the application. Katrin Harding went on to state that the location was intrinsically linked to environmental concerns. She highlighted that the site was immediately adjacent to Ashenbury lake and near a bird sanctuary. In addition, adding more houses without mains sewerage risked environmental harm. She also commented that the site had previously been used for landfill, raising concerns around health and safety and land stability. It was noted that 9 houses was just below the threshold for a more detailed application. There were concerns about the lack of transparency and the possibility of a piecemeal creep of development.

Councillor Jewell again reminded the Committee of the limited factors which could be taken into account when considering the application.

The Committee noted that the Council currently had a 1.7 year land supply of deliverable sites. Councillor Shepherd Dubey queried what percentage this site would increase supply by. James Fuller responded that the application would make a modest, positive contribution to the Borough's housing needs, but it was not as simple as pure percentages. The land supply was reviewed yearly. Councillor Smith added that it would represent 0.010%. Brian Conlon responded that what an individual site contributed in percentages was not necessarily of value, it was what cumulative developments contributed. Small developments also had an important role to play.

Councillor Smith was of the view that the site was not logical, being immediately located by a lake. He stated that it felt like an example of back yard development, and questioned the assertion that it was within walking distance to facilities in Charvil and Woodley. James Fuller responded that it was not back garden development. The site had part agricultural usage and scrubland. He emphasised that it had been deemed sustainable by a Planning Inspector and an adjacent site had also been considered sustainable by the Local Planning Authority. Departing from those conclusions would be inconsistent. He confirmed that the site was below the 1 hectare threshold.

Councillor Smith asked for officer comment as to whether it was a logical site. It had not been included in the Local Plan, when the HELAA in 2021 had not recommended this site because the land was considered to be unsuitable and not relating to the existing settlement pattern due to the impact on landscape and character. James Fuller indicated that the situation had changed and referred to the current 1.7 year land supply of deliverable sites.

Councillor Andrea commented that the tilted balance was engaged and as such there was a presumption in favour of development unless there was significant harm which outweighed the benefits of the application. He had some concerns regarding the site relating to sewage and landfill; however, these would be appropriate for the next stage of the process. He commented that the application site was not unsustainable and would not be isolated.

Councillor Jewell noted that the drainage officers had reviewed the application and had, had no objections.

Councillor Munro questioned should the application be approved, if the Committee would consider the next stage of the process. He was informed that as it was not a major application, the Committee would only review the application should it be listed. James Fuller explained that approval of permission in principle did not mean that any issues would be any less scrutinised by officers, at the next stage.

Councillor Akhtar asked about the conflict with CP11. James Fuller responded that the site was located in designated countryside. When looking at the purpose of CP11 which sought to maintain settlement limits and maintain the quality of the environment, it was considered that the application would not inflict on these objectives. There was a presumption in favour for sustainable development. The negative impacts of the development did not outweigh its benefits.

In response to questions from Councillor Iyengunmwena and Councillor Bello regarding density, officers explained that whilst density was a consideration, the site layout submitted was indicative and could be subject to change. A permission in principle looked at the amount of development and not how it was distributed.

Councillor Smith was of the opinion that it was not a good site, did not provide a natural extension to the current street scene or provide infill. He referred to the views across the lake which he believed would be impacted. He also commented that there had been some confusion around the boundary. Councillor Akhtar added that additional urbanisation would be created. He noted that the Countryside and Trees teams had objected to the proposal. James Fuller stated that it was not considered that there would be wider detrimental harm. Brian Conlon spoke about the value of the land. The magnitude of harm on the landscape had been concluded to be limited.

It was proposed by Councillor Andrea and seconded by Councillor Bello that the application be approved.

RESOLVED: That application 250407 be approved.

57. MAJORS PLANNING APPEALS PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Committee considered the Majors Planning Appeals Performance Update.

RESOLVED: That the Majors Planning Appeals Performance Update be noted.