

Public Document Pack



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

Tel:
E-mail: democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk

To:- All Committee Members

PLANNING COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 11TH JUNE, 2025

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the next Wednesday, 11th June, 2025 meeting of the Planning Committee, the following reports.

Agenda No	Item
------------------	-------------

- | | |
|----|---|
| 4. | <u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u> (Pages 3 - 6) |
|----|---|

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 May 2025.

Yours sincerely

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive

This page is intentionally left blank

UPDATE PAPER
Planning Committee – 11TH JUNE 2025

1. Planning Application Updates
--

Agenda Item: 7

Application No: 241861

Site Address: Land At Church Lane and Hyde End Road, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross, Reading, RG7 1HB

Pages: 11-60

Conditions

Revised Transport Condition to read as follows to respond to questions raised by Councillor's on the Site Visit:

6. Prior to commencement of development, details of highway improvements along Fullbrook Avenue, such as dropped kerbs, tactile paving, landscaping and signage, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The improvements shall be implemented in accordance with such details as approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable travel, convenience and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6.

2. Decisions and Updates of Note

App No.	222306.
Address	Land adjacent to Blagrove Lane, Wokingham RG41 4AX
Description	Outline application, with all matters reserved except for access, for the proposed erection of up to 350 dwellings (Use Class C3) and care home (Use Class C2), with new accesses onto Barkham Road and Blagrove Lane, landscaping and onsite SANG, following demolition of outbuildings and agricultural buildings.
Committee/Delegated	Committee.
Decision	Refusal (Contrary to officer recommendation)
Appeal decision	Allowed (APP/X0360/W/24/3354667)
Summary The appeal was allowed following the refusal of outline planning permission for up to 350 dwellings and a care home. The Inspector concluded that, while the proposal conflicted with several local plan policies, particularly those relating to spatial strategy, coalescence of settlements, and landscape character, these conflicts were outweighed by a range of material considerations, most notably the Council's significant housing land supply shortfall (1.7 years). Key outcomes for the LPA: Housing supply: The Inspector gave substantial weight to the delivery of both market and affordable housing, especially in light of the acute shortfall. The scheme contributes meaningfully to addressing this deficit. Policy weighting: Several local policies were deemed out-of-date due to their inconsistency with national policy and the Council's inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. This reduced the weight they carried in the decision-making process. Green Infrastructure and coalescence: While the Inspector acknowledged harm to the landscape and a perceived coalescence between Wokingham and Barkham, these were not considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme. SPA mitigation: The proposed SANG and associated mitigation measures were found to be robust and compliant with national and local policy, with Natural England raising no objection. Lessons for the LPA: • The appeal reinforces the weight Inspectors may give to housing delivery and public benefits in the context of national policy objectives. • The Inspector concluded that the adverse impacts did not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, and therefore, planning permission was granted. • It highlights the need for clear and defensible reasons for refusal, particularly where officer recommendations support approval. • The decision underscores the importance of maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan and a deliverable five-year housing land supply.	

FORMAT	Open consultation (MHCLG)
Description	Reform of planning committees: technical consultation
Date	Closes 23 Jul 2025 Opened 28 May 2025
Scope of this consultation: This MHCLG consultation seeks views on proposals around the delegation of planning functions, the size and composition of planning committees and mandatory training for members of planning committees. The consultation consists of 20 questions. The proposals cover three key areas: 1. National scheme of delegation 2. Committee size and composition controls 3. Mandatory training for planning committee members 1. National scheme of delegation Proposal: Introduce a consistent tiered scheme of delegation nationally, broken into: Tier A: Minor applications – to be delegated to officers by default in every case. Examples include householder, minors resi/commercial prior approvals, conditions NMAs, certificates etc. Tier B: More significant or sensitive applications – Delegated to officers unless the Chief Planner and Chair of Committee agree it should go to Committee based on a gateway test. Tier B includes anything not in Tier A, Reg 3 apps, S73 apps etc. 2. Committee size and composition controls Proposal: Set guidance or limits on committee size, no greater than 11 members. The government consultation identifies a committee of 8-11 members as being optimal for informed debate on applications. Wokingham's committee currently consists of 9 members. 3. Mandatory training for planning committee members Proposal: Introduce mandatory training and refreshers for all planning committee members, with possible external or accredited elements. The government's working paper originally sought views on introducing mandatory training for committee members. The proposal was strongly supported, and they are taking this forward, subject to Parliamentary approval, in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. Two options are being considered: 1. a national certification scheme which would be procured by MHCLG and involve an online test for certification; or 2. a local based approach where the local planning authority provides certification. The government's preference is for a national certification scheme. Delegated decision making/Performance	

The government has an existing framework to measure the decision-making performance of LPAs. The planning performance regime covers decision making by measuring the proportion of total decisions overturns at appeal (as well as speed of decision-making).

In seeking to modernise the planning system, MHCLG have proposed reviewing the thresholds in the performance regime to support high quality decision making across both committee and officer decisions.

For quality of decision making, the current threshold is 10% for major and non-major applications. MHCLG are seeking views on a proposal that in the future the threshold could be lowered to 5% for both.

The Council will be responding via an IEMD.

Further information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reform-of-planning-committees-technical-consultation/reform-of-planning-committees-technical-consultation#basic-information>