

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 5 NOVEMBER 2025

Present: Councillor Gavin (Chair);
Councillors Davies (Vice-Chair), Goss, Hornsby-Smith, Leng, Lovelock, McCann, Rowland, Tarar, Williams and Yeo

Apologies: Councillors Ennis and Moore

RESOLVED ITEMS

28. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Davies declared an interest in Item 34.

30. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Committee considered a report setting out a schedule of applications to be considered at future meetings of the Committee to enable Councillors to decide which sites, if any, they wished to visit prior to determining the relevant applications. The report also listed previously agreed site visits which were yet to take place.

It was reported at the meeting that the planning application 230822/OUT – Forbury Retail Park (west), which had previously been agreed for an accompanied site visit, had now been finally disposed of due to the failure of the applicant and agent to engage in progressing with the application; a new application for the site was expected in due course.

With regard to planning application PL/25/1191 – Land at Meadow Road, which had previously been agreed for an unaccompanied site visit, the Committee requested that the determination of that application should be made by the Committee.

Resolved -

- (1) That no additional site visits be arranged;
- (2) That the planning application PL/25/1191 – Land at Meadow Road be submitted to the Committee for determination.

31. PLANNING APPEALS

The Committee received a report on notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on planning appeals registered with them or decisions made and providing summary reports on appeal decisions of interest to the Committee.

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Appendix 1 to the report set out details of one new appeal lodged since the last Committee. Appendix 2 to the report set out details of five appeals decided since the last Committee.

Resolved –

- (1) That the new appeal, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;
- (2) That the outcome of the recently determined appeals, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted.

32. SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT - PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL

The Committee received a report on the work and performance of the Planning Development Management and Building Control team for the second quarter of 2025/2026 (April to September) with comparison to same quarters in the previous year. The report focussed on planning and building control application processing performance and fee income.

The report also gave details of reviews of and proposed changes to the Planning Pre-application Service and Building Control Charges Scheme and their associated fees, the decision on which would be taken by Policy Committee on 17 November 2025. An Appendix to the report set out the full details of the proposed changes to the fees schedule.

The Committee requested that it received a separate update report on planning enforcement performance every six months.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the Committee receive an update report on planning enforcement performance every six months.

33. LOCAL LISTING - ROYAL ALBION

The Committee considered a report on a proposal to add the Royal Albion, 642 Oxford Road, to the List of Locally Important Buildings and Structures. The report identified the building as being of local architectural importance and made an assessment based on the Council's published Local List criteria for inclusion to the list. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Location map
- Appendix 2 - relevant photos and illustrations
- Appendix 3 - Proposed local list text

An update report was tabled at the meeting that explained that an objection had been received from the proprietor's representative, raising concerns regarding the consultation

process and asking for the opportunity for the proprietor to make representations prior to the Committee's consideration.

The update report stated that, whilst the consultation process had been carried out correctly in line with the Council's Local Listing process, it was recommended that consideration of the item be deferred to the next meeting to allow time for the Council to review and respond to the matters raised, confirm the proprietor's involvement and facilitate further engagement before the matter was determined.

The Chair requested that members of the Committee be sent information on the relevant policies about the criteria and process for local listing for their reference.

Resolved –

- (1) That consideration of the report be deferred to the next meeting;
- (2) That information on the relevant policies about the criteria and process for local listing be sent to members of the Committee for their reference.

34. PL/25/1373 - PROPOSED TREE WORK TO FIVE LIME TREES AT 8 VICTORIA ROAD, TILEHURST

The Committee considered a report on proposed work to five lime trees at 8 Victoria Road, Tilehurst, which were subject to a Tree Protection Order (TPO) as the applicants were serving Councillors. The trees were shown as T3-17 on plan TPO 18/15 attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that on 29 September 2025 an application had been received from the owners seeking consent to re-pollard five lime trees (application reference PL/25/1373). The reason for the pruning was cited as being that 'these trees have been managed for many years through pollarding and they now require this in the normal cycle'. During an officer site visit, crown lifting by removing all basal and epicormic growth had been added to the application in order to provide better clearance for driveway use. Appendix 2 contained a photograph of the trees in situ.

The report concluded that re-pollarding was considered to be appropriate cyclical management of the trees, which were maintained as pollards. The crown lifting was considered reasonable due to the low foliage impeding access to the driveway and vehicles parked there. If agreed, approval would be subject to conditions requiring works to be done to good arboricultural practice and would limit the timing of the works to certain periods of the year to minimise impact on the trees' future health.

Resolved –

That the proposed tree work to the lime trees be approved.

(Councillor Davies declared an interest in this application. He left the meeting and took no part in the debate or decision.)

35. PL/25/1396 (LBC) - TOWN HALL, BLAGRAVE STREET

Proposed temporary opening up works and associated initial investigations to the roof structures of Reading Town Hall.

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved –

That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, planning permission for application PL/25/1396 (REG3/LBC) be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatics recommended in the report.

36. PL/25/0731 (ADJ) - LAND WEST OF KIDMORE END ROAD, EMMER GREEN, OXFORDSHIRE

Outline planning application for the development of up to 70 homes (including affordable housing), new vehicular access, associated parking and landscaping (all matters reserved except for access). (SODC ref P25/S1431/O)

The Committee considered a report on an adjacent authority consultation from South Oxfordshire District Council on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting giving details of the potential impact on vegetation of a proposed cycle link connection onto Highdown Hill Road. The update report recommended that an additional comment be made regarding requesting an updated arboricultural method statement.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

It was suggested at the meeting that the Section 106 financial contribution towards traffic signals and junction improvements in recommendation 2 in the original report should be increased from £50,000 to £150,000, and that the Section 106 financial contribution towards increasing capacity at GP surgeries within the Borough in recommendation 4 should be widened out to also include other healthcare services to allow more flexibility.

Resolved –

- (1) That South Oxfordshire District Council be informed that, should they resolve to grant outline planning permission for the proposed development, Reading Borough Council raised objections to the proposal for the reasons set out in the original report, unless the recommendations were met as set out in the original report, as amended by the update report, with the amendment in recommendation 2 of the S106 contribution from £50,000 to £150,000, and with the amendment in recommendation 4 of the S106 contribution to be for GP surgeries or other healthcare services;

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- (2) That South Oxfordshire District Council be sent a copy of the reports for their information and use.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.32 pm)