

**Minutes of the Planning Committee
17 September 2025**

Present:

Councillor D.L. Geraci (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

C. Bateson	T. Burrell	M.J. Lee
S.N. Beatty	R. Chandler	L. E. Nichols
M. Beecher	D.C. Clarke	K.E. Rutherford
M. Buck	K. Howkins	P.N. Woodward

Substitutions: Councillors K.M. Grant

Apologies: Councillors M. Gibson

56/25 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 20 and 27 August would be attached the agenda for the Planning Committee to be held on 15 October 2025.

57/25 Disclosures of Interest Under the Member's Code of Conduct

There were none.

58/25 Declarations of interest under the Council's Planning Code

All Committee members present declared that they had received correspondence in relation to application 24/0112/FUL, Land North East of Eco Park, Charlton Lane, Shepperton, TW17 8QA but had maintained an impartial role, had not expressed any views and had kept an open mind.

Councillor Rutherford declared that she had received emails from residents for all three applications.

Councillor Grant declared that she was a member of the Lower Sunbury Residents Association.

59/25 Planning application 24/01112/FUL - Land North-East of Eco Park, Charlton Lane, Shepperton, TW17 8QA

Description:

The construction of and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System of up to 100 megawatts electrical output with a total capacity of circa 200 megawatt hours, associated site access and partial cable route, with associated work.

Additional Information:

One additional letter of representation was received raising concerns regarding fire safety.

Another letter from a local resident was sent to Surrey Fire and Rescue and copied to the Council.

A letter was also sent directly to members of the Planning Committee raising objections to the proposal.

In the report there are references to 50 battery container units. This should in fact be 26 battery container units each comprising 2 batteries, with 50 batteries in total.

In paragraph 3.5 reference is made to an access point being created under the M3 Motorway. This is incorrect and no access is proposed under the M3.

Public Speaking:

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Nigel Spooner representing the Charlton Village, Lower Sunbury and Shepperton Residents' Associations spoke against the proposed development raising the following key points:

1. This still represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt
2. No evidence that the site could contribute to a more reliable, affordable and sustainable energy supply.
3. Application site is remote from any major renewable energy generation
4. There is no need for this to be on this application site and therefore there are no 'Very Special Circumstances'.
5. The potential hazardous nature of this technology is being ignored.
6. Risks relate to a battery 'thermal runaway' fire and its potential impact on nearby sensitive receptors such as a reservoir, water treatment works, housing and schools.
7. Safety concerns have been realised in other site in the UK.

8. National Fire Chiefs Council Guidance does not appear to have been properly followed.
9. The E.A. have not have not been specific in defining how much water would be needed to quench a battery thermal-runaway fire.
10. This application is entirely inappropriate, unnecessary and hazardous.

The Senior Planning Officer advised the Committee that the application was now smaller than the original submitted and that neither the Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority nor the Environment Agency had submitted any objections.

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Tim Mole, the applicant's agent, spoke for the proposed development raising the following key points:

1. Applicant has engaged with the community and consultees.
2. Two public consultation events had been held and a series of changes and improvements had been made to address local concerns.
3. The application has been scrutinised by the Council's officers and a robust set of safeguards and planning conditions have been put in place.
4. The E.A. withdrew their objections after their concerns were addressed.
5. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service raised no objections.
6. Measures have been agreed for habitat creation and biodiversity net gain.
7. Site will be monitored 24/7 from a UK based control room.
8. Project will contribute to decarbonisation.
9. Construction impacts such as traffic, dust and noise will be controlled through approved hours and routing.

Debate:

During the debate the following key issues were raised:

1. Inappropriate development of a Green Belt site.
2. Concerns over the access road to the site.
3. Don't think that this application meets the criteria for 'special circumstances'.
4. Application site is close to vulnerable area.
5. Using fossil fuels negates any benefit from the proposed scheme.
6. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency.
7. Landscaping scheme needs to be of a good standard.
8. The applicant would need to restore the site back to its original condition once the 'useful life' span has lapsed.
9. Major fires have occurred in the UK at other battery storage sites.
10. Thermal runaway would threaten nearby houses.
11. More green energy is needed for the future.
12. Questionable whether this site would help reduce CO2 emissions.

13. Clean energy is desirable and a battery storage facility is a good idea but not on this particular site.
14. Impact on local residents would be great if a fire broke out.

Councillor Howkins requested a named vote.

For	Councillors Burrell and Geraci -2 votes
Against	Councillors Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Buck, Chandler, Clarke, Grant, Howkins, Lee, Nichols, Rutherford, Woodward, - 12 votes
Abstain	0 votes

The motion to approve the application subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 8.3 of the report **FELL**.

It was proposed by Councillor Beecher and seconded by Councillor Clarke that the application is overturned and refused for the following reason:

The development is inappropriate in the Green Belt and there are no very special circumstances that outweigh the harm, contrary to Saved Policy GB1 of the Spelthorne Borough Local Plan 2001 and the NPPF 2024.

The Committee voted on the new motion as follows:

For – 13
Against – 0
Abstain - 1

Decision:

The application was overturned and refused for the following reason:

The development is inappropriate in the Green Belt and there are no very special circumstances that outweigh the harm, contrary to Saved Policy GB1 of the Spelthorne Borough Local Plan 2001 and the NPPF 2024.

60/25 Planning application 25/00710/FUL - 299 Feltham Hill Road, Ashford

Description:

Proposed roof extension with ridge height increase and 2 no. side-facing dormers to facilitate a change of use from a single dwelling (Use Class C3) to a house in multiple occupancy for 7 occupants (HMO) – Sui Generis.

Additional Information:

One late letter of objection has been received. The issues raised are already covered in the report.

Correction to para 7.16:

‘Although as noted above, the proposal would increase the overall height of the building to ~~6.3m~~ 6.2m and increase the eaves to 3.8ms, the side elevation is set in 1.5m from the boundary’.

Public Speaking:

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, David Gurwith spoke for the proposed development raising the following key points:

1. Well thought out scheme that will be regulated by a management team.
2. Ample Parking
3. Electric Charging Points
4. Property is in a sustainable location
5. Provides affordable housing for the vulnerable in the Borough
6. All bedrooms have their own en-suite
7. Energy efficient
8. Oversized kitchen and large communal living area
9. Extensive garden and communal gym facilities
10. Developer could make this a 6 bedroom HMO with no parking or communal living space under permitted development
11. This application ticks every box and has been approved by the Council's officers
12. In the surrounding boroughs there are approximately 11,000 illegal HMOs which identify that there is a need for this sort of residence
13. Anything that comes to this committee in respect of HMOs faces rejection

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Councillor Rutherford spoke as Ward Councillor against the proposed development raising the following key points:

1. Need to consider whether this application aligns with Planning Policies EN1 EN11 and HO1
2. Identified need for family homes in the Borough and this application removed a unit of family housing from the market
3. This fails to provide the right kind of housing in the right place
4. A 7-person HMO is likely to generate more cars than a family residence
5. Only 3 off-road parking spaces so overspill parking is likely, increasing congestion, reducing highway safety and harming neighbour amenity
6. 7 unrelated adults sharing one kitchen, lounge and garden does not deliver the high standard of amenity required
7. Does not offer a good quality of life especially in such a constrained shared environment
8. No noise assessment has been submitted.

9. The cumulative effects of MHOs across Ashford are more bins, cars and transient occupancy.
10. This application will set a precedent
11. 6 residents could live in the property under permitted development but the additional one resident can materially change the impact in terms of parking, amenity and neighbourhood pressure.

Following advice from the Council's legal representative at the Committee, Councillor Rutherford declared that she would not take part in the debate nor vote on the application submitted.

Debate:

During the debate the following key issues were raised:

1. On-street parking pressures would increase
2. This is an example of the developer 'maxing out' a development
3. Many people in the Borough can not afford flats so HMOs are their only option
4. Only one large kitchen that may not meet the needs of 7 residents
5. An attractive development on a wide road
6. Not overbearing and would not be a detriment to the area
7. Long walk from train station so residents would have to use cars

The Committee voted on the motion as follows:

For – 8

Against – 1

Abstain – 4

Councillor Rutherford did not vote.

Decision:

Approved subject to conditions set out in the report.

**61/25 Planning Application 25/00806/RVC - 18 Wellington Road,
Ashford, TW15 3RJ**

Description:

Variation to Condition 3 (Approved Plans) relating to planning permission 24/01542/FUL for roof alterations and extensions to create habitable roof space, with insertion of 1 no. front facing dormer and 1 no. rear facing dormer, erection of single storey side extension and a single storey rear extension. Changes to fenestration and extension of dropped kerb. All to facilitate the subdivision of the property into 2 no. flats (1 no. 2 bed and 1 no. 3 bed) with associated parking and amenity space.

Changes to single storey side extension to reduce set in from boundary (retrospective).

Additional Information:

A late letter of objection was received from No. 20 on Monday 15th September. No new issues were raised.

Revised plans were received on Monday 15th September. The revised plans amended a minor discrepancy in the roof extension over the single storey rear extension which was shown to have less steep pitch.

Condition 1 plan No's updated accordingly:

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: ~~PR-L003, REV A, PR-P001 REV A, PR-P002 REV A, PR-P004 REV A, PR-E001 REV A, PR-E002 REV A, PR-E003, REV A, PR-E004 REV A, PR-D001 REV A, PR-D002 REV A, PR-L002 REV A, PRS001 REV A, PR-S002 REV A, all received 02.09.2025.~~

PR-L003 REV A, PR-E001 REV A, PR-P002 REV A, PR-P004 REV A, PR-E001 REV A, PR-E002 REV A, PR-E003 REV A, PR-E004 REV A, PR-D001 REV A, PR-D002

Public Speaking:

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Martin O'Connell spoke against the proposed development raising the following key points:

1. The developers had already breached the approved plans.
2. The boundary wall had been built too near to the neighbouring property.
3. Building works began before planning approval was granted.
4. Strong belief that the property would be converted into a House of Multiple Occupation.
5. Increase on-street parking pressure.
6. Inappropriate development that does not respect the integrity of the planning system.

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Hannah Messham of Dimensions Planning & Architecture spoke for the proposed development raising the following key points:

1. The bungalow had been left neglected for many years before the applicant purchased it.
2. Planning permission had previously been granted for 2 high-quality flats with spacious living accommodation.

3. Prior approval had already been obtained for a side extension under permitted development that allowed the extension to be built right up to the boundary with number 20.
4. The applicant decided not to extend to the neighbours boundary due to concerns raised by the owner of the neighbouring property.
5. The space between the extension and the neighbours windows exceeds the BRE daylight standards.
6. The first floor elevation was deliberately sloped to safeguard light.
7. The tall hedges and trees that grew along the boundary and obstructed light had now been removed.
8. If the application was refused it would result in the applicant having to demolish the existing side extension which would result in months of renewed disruption whilst works were redone.

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Councillor Neal as Ward Councillor provided a statement that was read out by Councillor Nichols raising the following key points:

1. The 45 degree rule has been breached.
2. The building should adhere to the published plans.
3. The overreach in size was no accident.
4. Developer has shown disregard for safety and building regulations.
5. If approved, a condition should be put in place limiting any further changes to the dwelling.
6. Feel that the building work has been undertaken in the anticipation of permission to convert the dwelling to a House of Multiple Occupation.

Debate:

During the debate the following key issues were raised:

1. The Council should be enforcing the planning approval that was previously granted.
2. The applicant had breached the initial planning approval and if the Council had been aware of the breach whilst building work was being undertaken this would have been addressed.
3. The property is to the detriment of the neighbouring residents
4. Loss of light to one of the side windows.
5. This is a case of a deliberately 'pushing the limits'.

Councillor Clarke requested a named vote.

For	Councillors Beecher & Burrell – 2 votes
Against	Councillors Bateson, Buck, Clarke, Geraci, Howkins, Lee, Nichols, Woodward – 8 votes
Abstain	Councillors Beatty, Chandler, Grant, Rutherford – 4 votes

The motion to approve the application subject to conditions as set out in Paragraph 8 of the report **FELL**

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward and seconded by Councillor Clarke that the application is overturned and refused for the following reason:

The proposal is rejected due to the poor design and negative effect on amenity of the neighbouring 20 Wellington Road property due to loss of light and overbearing nature under EN1 of the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document, adopted 26th February 2009, the NPPF and the SPD on Design of Residential Extensions and New Residential Development, April 2011.

The Committee voted on the new motion as follows:

For – 12

Against – 0

Abstain - 2

Decision:

The application was **overturned** and refused for the following reason: -

The proposal is rejected due to the poor design and negative effect on amenity of the neighbouring 20 Wellington Road property due to loss of light and overbearing nature under EN1 of the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document, adopted 26th February 2009, the NPPF and the SPD on Design of Residential Extensions and New Residential Development, April 2011.

62/25 Planning Appeals Report

The Chair informed the Committee that if any Member had any detailed queries regarding the report on Appeals lodged and decisions received since the last meeting, they should contact the Interim Planning Development Manager.

Resolved that the report of the Interim Planning Development Manager be received and noted.