

Planning

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**Vale
of White Horse**

District Council

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Dear town or parish

Planning Service Update to Town & Parishes

We hope you are all keeping well and have found practical but safe ways to work with your communities during the Covid pandemic.

We want to give you an update on our work and what we believe is coming up this year.

COVID working

As you know Government advice is the planning system should continue to operate during the outbreak and we should find pragmatic alternative ways of working. Our office continues to be closed, so we are working remotely. Despite the impact of Covid on all of us, we have continued to receive a high number of planning applications, appeals and enforcement investigation requests.

Along with the national trend, since January the number of planning applications we have received has increased and we are sure you too are experiencing a greater demand on your time regarding planning matters. We appreciate your help in assisting the planning application process.

We are encouraging all customers to make online applications, representations, and payments, as paper copies or cheques causes significant delay in processing and administration as we are not operating from the office.

Planning surgery pilot

We are always looking at ways we can improve working with town and parishes which is why next month we will be piloting a surgery scheme with a small number of town and parish councils. The aim of this new initiative is to provide a regular time

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

for town and parishes to speak to senior planning staff about current planning matters. We hope to be able to improve our engagement with you and support you with the planning work your councils undertake. Assuming the pilot is successful, we will send you details about extending the scheme early in the autumn.

Email Alerts

To help people keep up to date with the latest news in your area, including about planning applications and decisions, Please encourage your communities to sign up for [our email alerts](#).

Development Management

Appeals

The Planning Inspectorate (PINS, an executive agency of MHCLG) processes and determines all planning appeals in England.

The Table below shows the results of planning appeals determined by The Planning Inspectorate for the Vale, from January 2020 to May 2021.

It normally takes between 21-23 weeks for written representations appeals, hearings between 41-61 weeks and public inquiries 56-62 weeks.

	Dismissed	Allowed	Part Allowed	Withdrawn	Total
2020	30	8	1	3	42
2021 to May	1	5	-	2	8

You will note that one of the decisions was part allowed. We refer to these as 'split decisions' as the Inspector has granted planning permission for part of the development but dismissed another part. This only happens in cases where there are several separate elements, such as a front and rear extension that could be built independently of each other.

Planning Committee

You may be aware by now that the Planning Committee meets face to face. For those who wish to, we are continuing the facility to address the planning committee virtually and we will continue to stream our meetings. Along with other councils we will be making representations to MHCLG about being able to continue with fully

virtual meetings in the future. If you wish to make representations, please follow this link; [Local authority remote meetings: call for evidence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence)

Permitted Development Reforms

You may have read in various press articles that Government has made several changes to the General Permitted Development Order which is an automatic planning permission for various types of development (with some restrictions). The aim of the recent changes has been to allow more development without the requirement for a formal planning application to be submitted. Here is a summary of the changes I think you are most likely to come across.

In terms of decision making on planning applications, we have to consider these changes, as they can become a 'fall back' position, which means we need to be mindful of what applicants could do under permitted development.

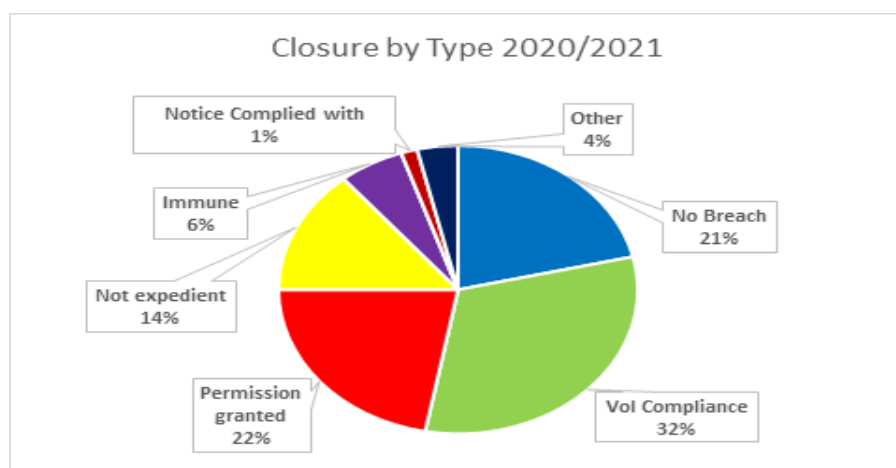
PD right	Reference	Key restrictions	Prior Notification requirements (matters to be considered)
Additional storeys to dwelling house (up to two additional storeys to a two-storey dwelling and one additional storey to a one storey dwelling)	Part 1 - Class AA	Not allowed in AONB, Conservation Areas	Yes – (neighbour impact, external appearance)
Change of use of dwelling to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (up to 6 persons) and vice versa	Part 3- Class L	None	No
Change of use of commercial, service and business use to dwelling (PD from 1/8/21)	Part 3 - Class MA	Not allowed in AONB or for listed buildings	Yes – (Highways, flooding, contamination, noise, conservation area, natural light provision)
Office to dwelling	Part 3 - Class O	Not allowed for listed buildings	Yes – (Highways, flooding, contamination, noise, natural light provision)
Agricultural building to dwelling	Part 3 - Class Q	Not allowed in AONB or for listed buildings	Yes – (Highways, flooding, contamination, noise, design and external appearance, and natural light provision)
Agricultural building to a flexible use (e.g., shop, café, hotel, office, warehouse)	Part 3- Class R	Not allowed for listed buildings	Yes – (Highways, flooding, contamination, noise)
Demolition of existing flats or commercial buildings (B1) and construction of dwellings (up to 1000m ²)	Part 20 - Class ZA	Not allowed in AONB or for listed buildings or any buildings newer than	Yes – (Highways, flooding, contamination, noise, design and external appearance, and natural light)

		31/12/89	provision, neighbouring amenity, heritage and archaeology, landscaping, method of demolition)
New dwellings on detached blocks of flats (up to 2 additional storeys)	Part 20 – Class A	Not allowed in AONB, Conservation Areas, or for listed buildings	Yes – (Highways, flooding, contamination, noise, external appearance, natural light provision, neighbouring amenity, fire safety (if higher than 18m))
New dwellings on detached commercial buildings (up to 2 additional storeys)	Part 20 – Class AA	Not allowed in AONB, Conservation Areas, or for listed buildings	Yes – (Highways, flooding, contamination, noise, external appearance, natural light provision, neighbouring amenity, fire safety (if higher than 18m))
New dwellings on dwellings (up to 2 additional storeys)	Part 20 – Class AC and AD	Not allowed in AONB, Conservation Areas, or for listed buildings	Yes – (Highways, flooding, contamination, design and external appearance, natural light provision, neighbouring amenity)

Planning Enforcement

Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 our Planning Enforcement team logged **185** cases for investigation, **123** cases were closed, and we currently have **281** cases on hand.

The diagram below illustrates the closures by types and includes the percentage number of cases this applies to.



You can search [our website](#) for current open cases. There is a search option as part of this which allows you to search by Parish. Please see the link below.

You can also [view the Planning Enforcement Register](#).

Please remember, dealing with and resolving planning enforcement matters can take month or even years to resolve because of the need for careful investigation and legal processes involved.

Building Control



Following a review of its processes, our Southvale Building Control service has been approved by Alcumus ISOQAR as compliant with the requirements of ISO 9001: 2015. This quality standard is an indication of the level of service we provide in a competitive market.

Building Safety Review

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower the UK Building Control System is under a review.

As part of the review Government asked HSE to establish a new building safety regulator.

A new [Building Safety Bill](#) is being introduced to strengthen the regulatory system for building safety, changing the industry culture and introducing rigorous safety standards for construction products and a clearer path to redress for homeowners. MHCLG has published the government's plans to introduce 'planning gateway one', part of the building safety reforms which delivers on one of Dame Judith Hackitt's recommendations. Further details can be found on [Guidance on Building safety: planning gateway one](#)

Future Homes Standards

The Government is setting a pathway to secure highly efficient buildings which are zero carbon ready. The new Standard should ensure new houses built from 2025 will provide 75-80% less carbon emissions than housing delivered under the current legislation.

The Government's response to the [first stage of a two-part consultation](#) on proposed changes to Part L (Conservation of fuel and power) of the Building Regulations was issued January 2021.

The time-table for implementation is set out below.

Table 4 - Future Homes Standard implementation timeline	
Timing	Milestones
Phase 1 – Introduce interim 2021 Part L uplift for all building types	
Jan 2021	– Publish <i>The Future Buildings Standard consultation</i> document
Dec 2021	– Interim Part L, Part F and Overheating Regulations made for domestic and non-domestic buildings
June 2022	– Interim Part L, Part F and Overheating Regulations come into effect – Developers must submit building notice / initial notice or deposit plans by June 2022, for transitional arrangements to apply
Phase 2 – Technical work and engagement	
Ongoing	– Industry engagement, including through BRAC and technical working groups
Autumn 2021 – summer 2022	– Research and analysis to develop proposed technical specification
Summer 2022 – 2024	– Develop sector-specific guidance and embed understanding of the technical specification of the Future Homes Standard
Phase 3 – Consultation & policy development	
Spring 2023	– Technical consultation on the proposed specification for the Future Homes Standard
Phase 4 – Full FHS implementation	

Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Front Door website

LABC has launched a new website called [Front Door](#) aimed at homeowners to provide useful advice on home improvements, building regulations, contracts, working with builders and designers, planning permission and much more. Please look at this website and we would be grateful if you could share with your communities.

Planning Policy

Joint Local Plan 2041

We have now approved the timetable for our new Joint Local Plan 2041 with South Oxfordshire District Council. You can view the timetable and find more information [on our website](#) . It involves key public consultation stages in summer 2022 and summer 2023, followed by independent examination, and then adoption in autumn 2024.

We have also published the [Call for Sites evidence request](#). This is preparatory work which will be used to inform the new joint plan.

All local plans must be reviewed every 5 years to ensure consistency with national planning policy. Our adopted Local Plan Part 1 (adopted 2016) will be 5 years old in December, we have therefore started our plan review - Please note our Plan continues to be relevant in planning decision making after December.

Joint Statement of Community Involvement

We will be updating our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to reflect the new digital environment. The SCI sets out how communities will be able to influence new planning policy documents such as the Local Plan. It also sets out the ways in

which interested parties can comment on planning applications for development. We are planning a public consultation on the draft SCI this summer and welcome your responses.

Housing Supply

Every April and May our Planning Policy team undertake an annual review of house building to assist our housing land supply monitoring. This includes contacting developers to understand how quickly they anticipate building existing planning permissions and visiting sites to monitor progress on the ground. We'll confirm the results on our website this summer in an updated 5-year housing land supply statement.

Joint Design Guide and Dalton Barracks-Supplementary Planning Document

Along with South Oxfordshire, we are currently preparing a new Joint Design Guide, this will be a key tool in helping us secure the highest quality development within the districts.

The guide builds upon and replaces the previous South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse design guides and will be published as an interactive website that acts both as a guide and as an assessment tool. It is intended to assist landowners, developers, applicants, agents, designers and planners in the process of delivering high quality development.

We are also working towards a Dalton Barracks Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which will provide more detail to the adopted planning policy.

National Model Design Code

Please see this [MHCLG video](#) which explaining the National Model Design Codes, which we hope you find helpful.

Community Infrastructure Levy

Following consultation and modification, we submitted the revised draft of our Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, independent examination in March. A Hearing Session took place on Thursday 27 May and we are now awaiting the Examiner's report with recommendations – once we receive this we will publish it on our website. The Charging Schedule and Examiner's report will be considered by Council before it can come into effect, we anticipate this happen in the Autumn.

Alongside the draft CIL Charging Schedule we have revised and consulted on our draft Developer Contributions (S106) SPD. We expect this to also be considered by Cabinet in the Autumn.

Oxfordshire Plan 2050

Work on the [Oxfordshire Plan 2050](#) continues, and public consultation on the next stage of the plan (Regulation 18 Part 2) is scheduled for this summer. After this consultation, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will be developed into a draft document, which will be published for comment in spring 2022, before submission, examination and adoption timetabled in 2023.

Consultation is also anticipated this summer on a refresh of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OXIS) last published in 2017. This will review Oxfordshire's strategic infrastructure needs up to 2040 and will inform work on the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan.

Neighbourhood Planning

We now have twelve adopted neighbourhood plans in the district, with three more at examination (Appleton with Eaton, Chilton and West Hanney) and others (including plan reviews) in progress.

If you want to know more about neighbourhood planning activity in our district please visit our interactive [map](#), which allows you to click on the parish you wish to explore. If you want to know more about neighbourhood planning in general or the support we offer please visit our [website](#).

Government proposals

First Homes

The Minister of State for Housing recently published [a statement](#) setting out Government's plans for delivery of First Homes and a new model for Shared Ownership through the planning system. These changes come into effect 28 June 2021.

The aim of the changes is to support home ownership and increase the supply of new housing. A First Home is discounted by 30 per cent against market value and at a price no higher than £250,000. The discount is in perpetuity through a planning obligation (S106). It is only for first time buyers with a combined income of less than £80,000. Through planning policy, including neighbourhood plans, local criteria can be set, including a lower income cap for a limited three-month period. First Homes is applicable to 25% of affordable housing secured.

The Planning Bill

A new Planning Bill was included in the Queen's speech on 11 May 2021. The proposals include a requirement for local councils to classify land as 'protected' or for 'growth'. This we believe would start to move away from the case by case assessment of some planning applications. There are also plans to speed up decision making, introduce new national infrastructure levy and develop a new system for environmental considerations.

The Environment Bill

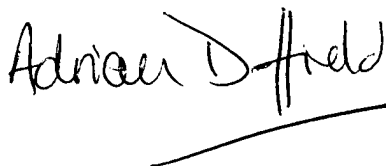
The Environment Bill is currently making its way through the report stage in the House of Commons and is anticipated to receive Royal Assent in 2022. The Bill will introduce some important changes to our work and changes that will impact all public bodies, including town and parishes. The main proposals include:

- Set new targets, plans and policies for **improving the natural environment**.
- Introduce a new UK **environmental protection policy**.
- Establish the **Office for Environmental Protection** (a new environmental watchdog)
- Set new **air quality targets** and introduce powers for tackling air quality issues.
- Set out a **strategy for waste and resource efficiency**.
- Provide Government with new powers to order the **recall of products failing to meet environmental standards**.
- Introduce new measures to safeguard **clean and environmentally sustainable water resources**.
- Introduces a requirement to deliver at least a **10% net gain for biodiversity** for all new development and a requirement for Local Authorities to produce **Nature Recovery Strategies**.
- Introduces **Conservation Covenants** to deliver legally binding and lasting conservation benefits arising from biodiversity net gain requirements.
- Provides powers to the Secretary of State to amend legislation **regulating the use of chemicals**.

We hope this update has been helpful. If you have any feedback, please do let us know. We thank you for your support whilst delivering the Planning Service during these challenging times.

Many thanks

Yours Sincerely



Adrian Duffield
Head of Planning