

Planning Committee

18 September 2025

Public Questions (2 total)

1. Question from Richard Lawler to Chris Gomm (Head of Planning) and Chair of Planning – Councillor Garth Barnes

One of the recurring themes raised at the Planning Committee, particularly by objectors, is concern about the *scale and size* of proposed developments in relation to nearby buildings. I recall one meeting where even the planning officer was unable to confirm the height of the building under consideration.

At present, many of the submitted drawings are marked “not to scale,” and often the space between buildings is not shown accurately. This makes it very difficult for residents to properly judge the impact.

Will the council consider requiring applicants to provide plans on a standardised grid (for example, 1 square = 1 metre), particularly for street scene views? This would allow residents to clearly gauge the width and height of proposed buildings as well as the distances between them.

Response from Chris Gomm (Head of Planning) and Chair of Planning – Councillor Garth Barnes

Thank you for your feedback. The plans and drawings submitted as part of a planning application must be drawn to an identified scale and must also show the direction of north (if applicable); this is a legal requirement of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Our Planning and Validation Officer ensures that this, and other mandatory validation requirements, are met before validating any application.

Plans and drawings which are labelled as ‘not to scale’ must nevertheless be drawn to scale; the applicant can not ‘opt out’ of this legal requirement. A drawing drawn to scale can be accurately measured using a scale-rule or, if in an electronic format, can be measured using the software available on our public access website.

2. Question from Councillor David Willingham, Ward Member for St. Peters, to Chris Gomm (Head of Planning) and Chair of Planning – Councillor Garth Barnes

In January 2024, Planning Committee approved planning application 21/02832/OUT for Lansdown Industrial Estate; however, at the time of submitting this question, over 19 months after that committee meeting, the decision notice for this application has still not been issued. Given the local blight caused by uncertainty surrounding this application and the problems this is causing for local residents, could the Chair please provide a public response detailing exactly what the problems are with issuing the decision notice for this application?

Response from Chris Gomm (Head of Planning) and Chair of Planning – Councillor Garth Barnes

Thank you for your feedback.

Planning decisions cannot be issued until any associated s106 Agreement has been completed; this is because the s106 Agreement forms an integral part of the planning decision.

In the case of the redevelopment of Lansdown Industrial Estate (application ref. 21/02832/OUT) which the Planning committee resolved to approve at its January 2024 meeting, the permission has not yet been issued because negotiations regarding the content of the s106 Agreement are complex, ongoing and yet to be completed. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. The applicant has confirmed that they are unable to build a standalone new artists' studio due to financial viability issues.
2. Discussions have been ongoing regarding alternative provision for the artists including the possibility of converting an existing building to a studio.
3. The s106 Agreement relating to the redevelopment of Lansdown Industrial Estate will need to be amended to take into account the alternative scheme but those alternative arrangements do not have planning permission.
4. The developer is yet to submit a planning application for the alternative scheme and until they do so (and it is approved) the Lansdown Industrial Estate s106 Agreement cannot be completed (and nor therefore can the planning permission be issued).

It is the view of officers that the matter is taking an excessive amount of time to resolve and as such a final deadline of 24 October 2025 for the submission of the aforementioned planning application (the alternative artists' studio) has been issued. If this deadline is not met officers are minded to refer the planning application back to the November meeting of the Planning Committee; the agent has been made aware of this.