



PRE-PLANNING APPLICATION MEETINGS

Guidance for Councillors and Developers

Adopted 7 September 2022

Aldbourn Parish Council recognises that pre-application discussions play an important role in major planning applications and welcomes the desire of developers to consult both the Council and the public more widely. However, the Council is also aware of the importance of public perception in planning and the critical need to avoid any appearance that the Council is conducting secretive negotiations or colluding with developers.

Pre-determination

In all meetings with developers, members are reminded of the critical importance of not predetermining their position on any future application, as this could require them to take no part in the discussion. It is noted, however, that expressing a pre-disposition, for example of either 'welcome in principle' or 'concerns', is permissible.

Individual members' discussions

Individual members may be approached by developers for informal discussions of possible future applications. Whilst it is left to the individual judgement of members whether to take part in such discussions, based on the nature and likely level of controversy of the application, they are advised:

- i. to always apply the rules of the Councillors Code of Conduct, which must always be complied with;
- ii. to carefully consider the public perception of such meetings;
- iii. to avoid any appearance of collusion in applications;
- iv. to avoid accepting hospitality in connection with such meetings;
- v. to advise the Chairman & Clerk, and where possible the Council, of such meetings.

Members must not purport to be representing the Council at such meetings, unless expressly authorised to do so by the Council.

Pre-application briefings

The Council is, in general, willing to hold meetings with developers prior to public consultation on the following two conditions:

- i. **full public consultation is either already scheduled or firmly planned;**
- ii. **the meeting is open to the public to attend and has been reasonably advertised.**

The policy of the Council is not to hold private meetings with developers unless there is a necessary and compelling reason that could be justified to the public (for example a strong commercial sensitivity, where a developer wishes to receive an initial steer before deciding whether to progress).

Pre-application public consultations

The Council strongly encourages developers to carry out full public consultation before submitting plans for major developments, on the following basis:

- i. an accessible and convenient venue;
- ii. sufficient publicity to likely interested parties, in good time;
- iii. appropriate timings to allow as wide a range of people as possible to attend;
- iv. a genuinely open mind and willingness to adapt plans in response to feedback.

In general members are advised not to attend separate private briefings as part of public consultation, but instead to attend with the public.

Review and Audit

This Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if there are any changes in legislation.

Last Review Date: 10 September 2025 (Item 81/25)

Next Review Date: September 2028