Eldon Parish Council

Pre- Planning Application Protocol

Introduction

Eldon 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 community more widely. The Council is also aware of the importance of public perception in planning and the need to avoid any appearance that the Council is conducting secretive negotiations or is colluding with developers.

Meeting with developers

In all meetings with developers, Councillors are aware of the critical importance of not pre-determining their position on any future planning application as this could require them to take no part in the discussion. Expressing a pre-disposition, such as “welcome in principle” or “having concerns”, is permissible.

Councillors meeting developers

Individual Councillors may be approached by developers for informal discussions of future applications. It is left to the individual Councillor’s judgement whether to take part in such discussions. Councillors will base that judgement on the nature and likely level of controversy of the application and in particular will consider the public perception of such meetings, will avoid any appearance of collusion, will avoid accepting any hospitality and will advise the Chairman or Clerk of such meetings *in advance.*

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

Policy

1. The Council is, in general, willing to hold meetings with developers prior to public consultation on the following two conditions:
   - Full public consultation is either already scheduled or firmly planned
   - The meeting is open to the public to attend and has been reasonably advertised.

2. 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).

3. Council prefers developers to make presentations at scheduled meetings of its Planning Committee.

4. If a specially called meeting is required, then Council will expect the consulting developer to pay for the venue.

5. Council encourages developers to carry out full public consultation before submitting plans for major developments on the following basis:
   - An accessible and convenient local venue
   - Sufficient publicity to likely interested parties, in good time
   - Appropriate timings to allow as wide a range of people as possible to attend
   - A genuinely open mind and willingness to adapt plans in response to feedback.