

Planning Proposal
(a motion by MP seconded by DR)

Introduction

I believe that it is our duty to ensure that Planning applications in the Parish are properly scrutinised and that to demonstrate this the Council must be seen to support, object, or to formally offer no comment on substantive* planning applications.

As there has been apparent indifference or a reluctance to comment to recent applications I propose the following system be applied where responses cannot be debated and processed in the normal meeting time-frame.

Proposed Procedure (the Motion):

1. The Clerk is to circulate all substantive planning applications and set a working deadline for responses, that permits the activity described below and a timely return.
2. Councillors are to respond by the working deadline with the following options: Support; Object; Abstain. Councillors who do not respond by the working deadline will be counted as having abstained.
3. If a Councillor objects to an application they are to circulate notes describing their rationale.
4. The majority view will prevail and in accordance with our meeting rules if there is an even ballot the Chair will gain a deciding vote. The Clerk is to maintain a record of responses/votes.
5. If the majority abstain, or do not respond by the working deadline, but a quorum of at least 3 Councillors object or support, the objection or support will be taken forwards as the Council's position.
6. A Councillor will be invited or may volunteer to draft the response on behalf of the Council**. The response must be circulated but the circulation is to refine content rather than argue with the determined stance.
7. The clerk will make the submission on behalf of the Council.

*I suggest that some judgement is applied as to what is substantive. In particular, the cutting back of trees might not be, particularly in this time of ash dieback, but the felling of trees might.

**I would prefer that we have a nominated Planning Lead, mirroring our Speed, Flood, Highways and RoW system, so we develop an internal "expert" and are seen to comment in one "voice". Indeed, I'd volunteer to do this myself if someone else would take the Chair.