

Pre-application discussions protocol

Introduction

In the advent of Localism and the Big Society developers are encouraged to enter into pre-application discussions with the planning authority, relevant stakeholders and the community prior to the submission of a formal planning application.

This protocol sets out how the Parish Council shall consider planning pre-application discussions not only to respect the interest of the developer but also to preserve and enhance the interests of its residents. It details how the Parish Council's views shall be communicated to the planning authority (Telford & Wrekin Council), stakeholders, developers and the community.

Parish Council's Involvement in pre applications

As a statutory consultee in the planning process it is essential for Rodington Parish Council to be involved in the pre application process for the following reasons:

- It has a good understanding of its area and the community.
- It is keen to ensure growth within the Parish is of the right type and in the right location.
- It provides an advocacy role for its residents, effectively representing their views
- The Parish Council is likely to be a party to future negotiations, particularly when Section 106 and Community Gain discussions are possible.

Types of pre-application discussions.

The Parish Council will deal with the various types of pre-application discussions in the following ways:

- **When a developer or landowner has entered into a formal pre-application process with the Planning Authority (Telford and Wrekin Council) and paid a fee for the service, the information will be received by the Parish Council from TWC in the form of a PE application which will include the Application Form and Site Plan.**
- **The Parish Clerk will have 5 working days for householder applications, applications for Agricultural buildings up to 540sqm, change of use to garden and applications for non-residential minor up to 40sqm and 10 working days for other applications to consult with Parish Council Members and to form an opinion which will be shared with the applicant through TWC formal process, for this formed opinion to be made it will need a quorum of the Council to respond with their opinion, this shall be three Council Members.**

- **When a developer contacts the Parish Council directly to obtain the view of the Parish Council as a corporate body, it is important that the Parish Council is open and transparent about such a communication.**
 - a. On receipt of a communication from a potential developer or landowner, all Members of the Parish Council will be notified and have the opportunity to be involved via email.
 - b. The Chairman and Vice Chairman would have delegated authority to invite the potential developer to a meeting for the Parish Council to receive information about their proposals.
 - c. The Parish Council cannot, at this stage, offer support or opposition, but would use this meeting as an opportunity to find out more about the proposals and how they will affect the Parish and its residents.
 - d. It would be useful for a Parish Council to have a Neighbourhood Plan or Parish Plan in place, which would detail suitable development and possible sites for consideration.
 - e. It would also be useful to have a 'wish list' of small parish schemes that have been identified by the local council, in consultation with the community, which may be discussed as possible community gain options alongside any application which may come forward.
 - f. Following such a meeting, the Parish Council would suggest to the developer / landowner that they engage with the Planning Authority through the Council's formal pre-application consultation.

- **If the developer contacts the Parish Council directly and seeks the informal opinions of individual councillors, the Clerk or Councillors they must not express a view that could be thought of as the 'view of the Corporate Parish Council'. Any approach will be reported to the next available meeting.**
 - a. On receipt of such an approach from a developer or landowner, the Clerk will respond to suggest that the process above be followed.

Confidentiality

The Parish Council understands there may be sometimes a need for developers to seek confidential discussions with the Parish Council. The Parish Council is mindful of its duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the need to ensure that as much information is available to the public as possible.

The developer / landowner / applicant will have had an opportunity, through the TWC Pre-Application consultation process, to opt-in to sharing information with the Parish Council. The Parish Council will recognise that the information received within the protocol of this consultation should remain confidential to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council will be guided through the process by the Local Planning Authority.

This procedure was adopted by members of Rodington Parish Council at its meeting held 6th May 2020.