



## Oswestry Rural Parish Council

# PLANNING PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSION POLICY

### Introduction

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 policy sets out how the Parish Council will 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 (Shropshire Council), stakeholders, developers and the community.

### Oswestry Rural Parish Council's involvement in pre-applications discussions

As a statutory consultee in the planning process it is desirable for the 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 in the right location.
- It provides an advocacy role for its residents, effectively representing their views when they feel they are unable to.
- The Parish Council may be a party to S106 negotiations on community assets required for the Parish.

### Pre-application discussions directly with the Parish Council

The Parish Council will normally approach pre-application discussions in the following way:

- The developer contacts the Parish Council directly to obtain the view of the Parish Council as a body. Discussions will consist of a presentation to the whole Parish Council at a Parish Council meeting.
- The developer contacts the Parish Council directly to seek the informal opinion of individual councillors. The Councillor will not express a view that could be thought of as the view of the Parish Council and will report to the next available meeting that they have been approached and their response will be recorded.

### Pre-application discussions through Shropshire Council

Shropshire Council offers developers a formal pre-application process and will charge a fee for the service. Should the Parish Council be approached for its opinion these will be considered on individual merits depending and whether discussions are to be confidential.

### 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.

As a general rule all pre-applications will be considered by the Parish Council in the public domain however the following occasions will be the exception:

- Shropshire Council, having processed the pre-application is satisfied that the application meets the provisions of the Public Interest Test and should remain confidential will make that decision made known to the Parish Council. The Parish Council will be guided by Shropshire Council on its approach to the discussions.
- The developer has provided a compelling argument that the application is commercially sensitive, and disclosure of information would either prejudice or adversely affect future contract negotiations/transaction.

No other reasons will be considered to exclude members of the public and press thus rendering the documents relating to the application confidential.

## Meetings

The Clerk should be present with Councillors in pre-application meetings. The Clerk should make clear that discussions will not bind the Council to making any particular decision and that any views expressed by Councillors are personal and provisional. By the very nature of such meetings not all relevant information may be at hand, nor will formal consultations with interested parties have taken place.

Written notes should be made of all meetings (and phone conversations). Notes should record issues raised and advice given.

*Policy adopted 25 August 2015*

*Reviewed and adopted 26 September 2017*

*Next review date September 2020*