



# OLD CLEEVE PARISH COUNCIL POLICY FOR PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

<b>Version</b>	<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>Minute reference</b>	<b>Changes</b>
1.0	16 September 2024		Approved new policy



## INTRODUCTION

1. Old Cleeve Parish Council (the Parish Council) recognises that pre-application discussions can play a role in planning applications and welcomes the desire of developers to consult both the Parish Council and the community more widely.

## PURPOSE

2. The Parish Council is also aware of the importance of public perception in planning and the need to avoid any appearance that the Parish Council is negotiating with or advising developers, or pre-determining its position. The Parish Council has therefore chosen to adopt this policy for pre-application planning consultations and engagement.

## DEVELOPERS' MEETING WITH INDIVIDUAL COUNCILLORS

3. Councillors must be aware of their obligations under the Parish Council's Code of Conduct. Individual Councillors **must not** enter into informal discussions of possible future applications with a developer; to do so may lead to a complaint for a potential breach of the code.
4. Councillors **must** advise the Chairman or Clerk of any approach by developers.

## DEVELOPERS' ATTENDANCE AT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

5. The policy of the Parish Council is **not** to hold private meetings with developers.
6. The Parish Council is, in general, willing to invite developers or their agents to attend a Parish Council Meeting at which the public are present, to give a presentation on their proposal.
7. The Parish Council prefers this to be at a scheduled meeting of the Parish Council. If a specially called meeting is required, then the Parish Council will expect the consulting developer to pay for the venue.
8. If a site meeting is required, then at least **five** Parish Councillors will need to be present. The Clerk will make the arrangements for any site meetings with Councillors. The outcome of this will be reported to the next available full Parish Council Meeting and included in the Minutes and a follow-up letter sent by the Clerk.



## **PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING DISCUSSIONS**

9. Councillors can ask questions for clarification or to help the developer resolve any concerns they may have, such as, for example, additional traffic, access and egress to the site, design, loss of privacy to neighbours, etc.
  
10. Councillors should however, refrain from discussing in depth issues that would be the responsibility of the Planning Department at Somerset Council. For example, councillors can express a preference for sympathetic materials but should not normally discuss the exact materials that they would wish to see.
  
11. Councillors must **not** state whether they would support the proposed application. Such a decision can only be taken when a formal planning application is received from Somerset Council for comment. It is vital that the words and behaviour of Parish Councillors during pre-application planning discussions cannot be interpreted by the potential developer as pre-judging the decision of the Parish Council. There must be nothing said or done which might indicate any element of 'pre- determination'. If not observed, the Councillor will be unable to vote on the matter when the application comes before the Parish Council.