



Saltash Town Council



Policy/Procedure:

Planning: Pre-application Discussions

Date of Adoption:

April 2018

This is a Policy or Procedure document of Saltash Town Council to be followed by both Councillors and employees.

Current Status			
Version	1	Approved by	P&R
Date	April 2018	Date of approval	10.04.2018
Responsible Officer	AJT	Minute reference	07/18/19k
Responsible Committee	P&R	Review date	Start of new council term or if change in advice from CALC

Version History			
Date	Version	Author/Editor	Comments
April	1	AJT/CALC	

Review Record				
Date	Type of Review	Date of completion	Summary of actions	Completed by

Guiding Principles for Pre-Application Discussions

Pre-application discussions have an important role in all types of planning applications. Local Councils are particularly aware of the importance of public perception in planning and the need for transparency in the relationships with developers.

Pre-application meeting

In considering a request to meet with the developer prior to formal submission of a planning application, Saltash Town Council would expect that:

1. The meeting is open to the public to attend and has been reasonably advertised.
2. The developer meets all reasonable costs the hosting of the public meeting including the provision of large-scale paper plans display purposes.
3. A public consultation or engagement event is either already scheduled, or firmly planned.

Saltash Town Council may wish to combine a public engagement events with a scheduled council meeting rather than a separate event. Whilst for large developments and initial pre-app meeting and community engagement event may be far apart in time, the small applications, these could effectively be undertaken at the same meeting.

Saltash Town Council will not normally hold private meetings with developers unless there is unnecessary and compelling reason which 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).

Pre-application community engagement (PACE)

Saltash Town Council were encouraged developers to carry out engagement with the local community before submitting plans for significant or complex developments. Any PACE meeting must meet the following expectations:

1. The venue is convenient and accessible in the community.
2. Sufficient and timely publicity within the community and to or likely interested parties. The timing of the meeting should be appropriate to allow as wide a range of people as possible to attend.
3. That there is a genuinely open mind and willingness to adapt planned in response to community feedback.
4. The developer meets all reasonable costs are hosting a public meeting including the provision of large-scale paper plans for display purposes.

Saltash Town Councillors are advised not to attend separate private briefings as part of public consultation, but instead to attend a public event.

As well as working with the Town Council on a public engagement events, developers also have the option of a formal pre-application community engagement forum facilitated by Cornwall Council for more significant or complex applications. Developers should contact Cornwall Council for further details on these options.

Pre-application process and the Code of Conduct for local councils

It is noted that some Town Councils are concerned about potential issues with encouraging early conversations with developers on pre-application proposals. These include requests for meetings with individual councillors and how feedback on the proposal could be viewed as predetermination.

It is recommended:

Individual Councillor's discussions

- a. Councillors must be aware of their obligations under the Council's code of conduct.
- b. Individual Councillors must not enter into informal discussions of possible future applications with the developer; to do so may lead to a complaint for a potential breach of the code.
- c. Where a site meeting is needed, the Council will nominate at least two representatives to attend.

A developer should not attempt to lobby individuals; if this occurs, the Town Council reserves the right to withdraw from any pre-application process.

Pre-determination

Councillors should avoid expressing any detailed opinion or prior view which might be viewed as predetermination. To this end, a formal meeting arranged by the Town Council could include the following suggested wording on the meeting agenda or invitation:

While I/Members may express an opinion for or against the proposal at this meeting, my/our mind(s) is/are not closed and I/we will only come to a conclusion on whether are you/we should support the scheme or offer an objection after I/we have listened to the full debate.

A similar statement could also be read out and clearly stated at the start of an informal meeting, to make it clear that the members of the Town Council attending are not pre-determining the position on a proposal. Local councillors could also include the words "in principle" or "subject to" when expressing their views to further emphasise that any opinions given at this stage are not prejudging a proposal in advance of a formal planning application.

Version History

Date	Details
September 2018	Note: Words importing the masculine gender only shall include all other genders and vice versa.