

The Role of a Parish Council on Planning Matters.

The role of the Parish Council (PC) is to represent local views and should: -

- Provide local knowledge.
- Raise areas of concern.
- Inform, debate, and add value to the process.
- Contact and involve District Councillors if required.

Parish Councils (PC) are statutory consultees in the planning process and must be informed of all planning applications, and any amendments to those applications, within the parish. The PC can only comment on these planning applications in the same way as any other member of the public, however, any comments by the PC must be agreed during a properly called public council meeting.

Members of the public attending the meeting can comment, speak in support of or object to any application during the 'Open Forum' segment of the meeting, but not during the council's deliberations later. However, they may be asked to provide clarity on details of the application during the PC's deliberations at the invitation of the person chairing the meeting.

Comments agreed in the council meeting are submitted in writing by the Parish Clerk to the Local Planning Authority (Shropshire Council).

Prior to the meeting, councillors are expected to study all the documents submitted with the application carefully and may wish to can request the views of the statutory bodies e.g., English Heritage, Environment Agency, Highway Authority, etc. The local planning authority will almost certainly be bound by the advice of these statutory bodies.

It is important to remember that the PC is only a consultee and counts as one opinion. Without advice from residents of the Parish the members of the PC will give their own opinions. The PC can, and should, seek the views of residents, particularly in controversial cases, and should reflect local feeling during the deliberation process. However, where there is widespread objection, or support, for a proposal the PC will always urge members of the public to make their own comments on the Shropshire Council Planning Portal.

It must be understood that the PC's comments in response to a planning application can only be based on planning matters. Where possible the PC can quote policies in the Local Plan as these are the starting point for considering the merits of any application.

Any comments or objections made must have a genuine material planning consideration and matter of relevance to the development.

Material Planning Considerations include (but are not limited to):

- Layout density
- Risk of flooding or pollution
- Overlooking and loss of privacy
- Local economy
- Overshadowing and loss of light
- Appearance, effects on street, area or building
- Past planning history or appeal decision relating to the site
- Central Government policy and guidance
- Design, appearance & materials
- Adequacy of parking
- Noise & Smell
- Landscape, contamination, loss of trees
- Access / traffic generation

The following are NOT considered to be material considerations:

- History of the applicant
- Loss of view
- Commercial competition
- Change from previous scheme
- Impact on property value
- Restrictive covenants
- Ownership of land, right of access
- Noise/disturbance during construction
- Land & boundary disputes
- Land ownership
- Damage to property
- Private rights of way
- Deeds & covenants
- Private issues between neighbours
- Lots of objectors

Objections should be clear, concise, relevant, and accurate to stand a chance of being accepted. Whilst the local planning authority must consider the representations of the PC this does not mean that an application will be decided in accordance with the views of the PC. In reaching a decision, the local planning authority is required to weigh up all issues associated with an application and comments made by the PC may have insufficient weight to enable the application to be determined in line with the wishes of the Parish.

When the PC response is 'NO OBJECTION' it is satisfied that all the above have been considered carefully and applied to the application under consideration so has no area for objection. However, the PC may make recommendations for planning conditions to be added to the application should the local authority grant approval.

Planning conditions will only be imposed by the local authority where they are: -

- Necessary
- Relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted
- Enforceable
- Precise
- Reasonable

Many decisions on planning applications are decided by case officers without being reported to a Planning Committee. Planning officers make a recommendation to the Principal Officer with delegated authority to make decisions. The Case Officer's recommendation may or may not be accepted and the decision is not made until the formal Notice of Decision is signed by the Principal Officer.

Alternatively, any member of the Planning Committee may request an application is determined by the Committee prior to the consultation expiry of the application, for the following reasons:

- The application is a major development.
- The application has an exceptional level of public interest.
- The application is likely to raise in debate on planning issues.
- The applicant (or their spouse or partner) is an employee or a member of the Local Council.
- The decision would be significantly contrary to policy in the Local Plan.
- The Local Council is the applicant