



Sutton Courtenay Parish Council

Protocol for Pre-application Meetings on Developments

Guidance for Councillors and developers

Sutton Courtenay Parish Council recognises that pre-application discussions play an important role in many planning applications and welcomes the desire of developers (whether for large or small projects) to consult both the Council and the public more widely. However, the Council is also aware of the importance of public perception in planning and the critical need to avoid any appearance that the Council is conducting secretive negotiations or colluding with developers.

Pre-determination

In all meetings with developers, Members are reminded of the critical importance of not pre-determining their position on any future application, as this could require them to take no part in the discussion. It is noted, however, that expressing a pre-disposition, for example of either 'welcome in principle' or 'concerns', is permissible.

Pre-application briefings

The Council is, in general, willing to hold meetings with developers prior to public consultation on the following two conditions:

- i. full public consultation is either already scheduled or firmly planned;
- ii. the meeting is open to the public to attend and has been reasonably advertised.

The policy of the Council is not to hold private meetings with developers unless there is a necessary and compelling reason that could be justified to the public.

Pre-application public consultations

The Council strongly encourages developers to carry out full public consultation before submitting plans for major developments, on the following basis:

- i. an accessible and convenient venue;
- ii. sufficient publicity to likely interested parties, in good time;
- iii. appropriate timings to allow as wide a range of people as possible to attend;
- iv. a genuinely open mind and willingness to adapt plans in response to feedback.

In general Members are advised not to attend separate private briefings as part of public consultation, but instead to attend with the public.

This policy was adopted at the Council meeting on 7th October 2025 to be reviewed at the Annual Meeting or sooner should legislation dictate.