



Planning Guidance for Members of Corsham Town Council

Contact with applicants, developers and objectors

As a community leader and local representative you will want to be involved in relevant pre-application discussions and public meetings.

Councillors can involve themselves in discussions with developers and others about planning matters provided you keep to the following guidelines:

Predetermination (Localism Act 2011)

- Predetermination occurs where someone has a closed mind so that they are unable to apply their judgment fully and properly to the issue requiring a decision. This can lead to legal challenges and decisions being set aside.
- A member is not deemed to have had a closed mind on an issue just because they have indicated what view they have taken or may take before the issue is decided. A member is not, for example, prevented from participating in discussion of an issue or voting on it if they have campaigned on the issue or made public statements about their approach to it.
- The general position, however, remains that, whatever their views, members must approach their decision-making with an open mind in the sense that they must have regard to all material considerations and must be prepared to change their views if persuaded that they should.

Other matters

- Where developers organise a public exhibition or display of their proposals, it is acceptable to visit to examine the proposals and ask questions of the developers to ensure that you are fully informed of the nature of the proposals. You may feed in your own and your local community's concerns and issues and engage in discussion.
- Pre-application meetings with developers or prospective applicants may be a positive way of engaging the developer to seek to ensure that community needs are met. However, if approached directly, you should refer any requests for such a meeting to the Chief Executive. Staff can then help organise the meeting and ensure that those present are advised from the start that the discussions will not bind the authority to any particular course of action.
- Refer those who approach you for planning, procedural or technical advice to Town Council officers or Wiltshire Council as appropriate.
- Advise those looking for policy guidance to examine the policies in adopted local plans and the Local Development Framework.
- Avoid meeting developers alone or putting yourself in a position where you appear to favour a person, company or group.
- Remember that the Members' Code of Conduct must be complied with at all times.