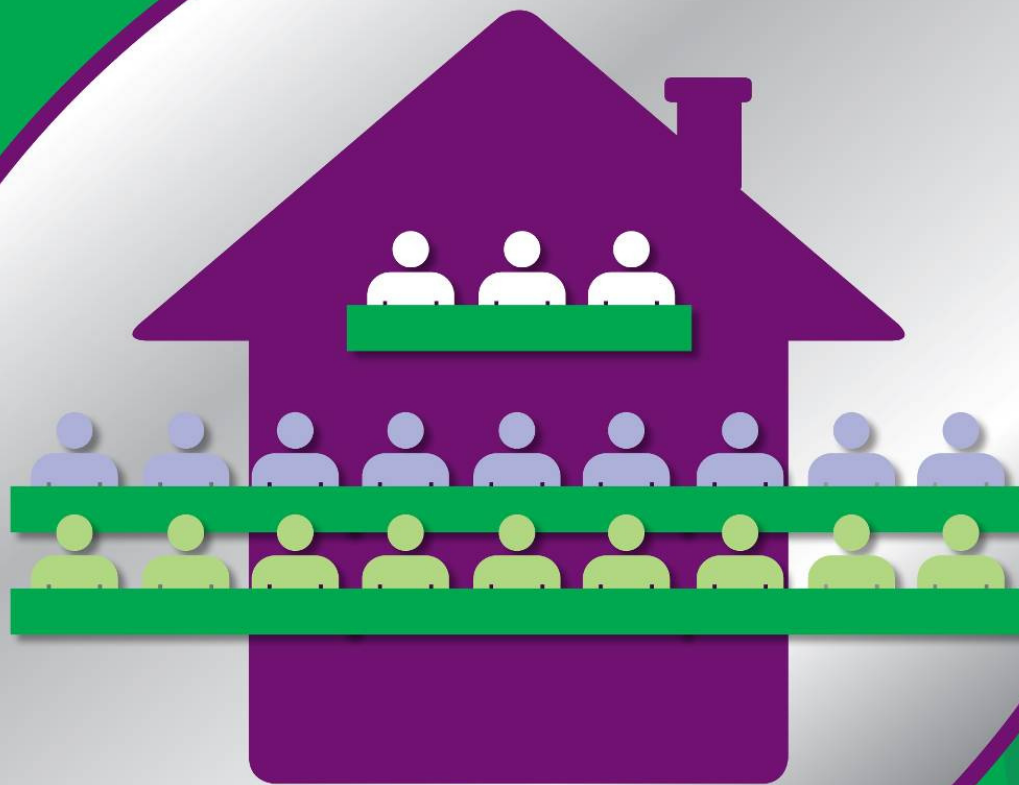




East
Northamptonshire
Council

Protocol for involving Members in pre-application discussions



Involving Members of the Council to
discuss major planning applications

Protocol for Involving Members in Pre-application discussions

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has a protocol which sets out how major planning applications are to be dealt with. Some major applications will benefit from the involvement of Members of the Council and this protocol provides clear guidance regarding this involvement. This will help improve the built form of the development and help speed up the process.
- 1.2 In addition, Members may want to be involved with smaller applications and this protocol also applies.
- 1.3 Case Officers will need to notify the relevant Members when they receive a pre-application query, in relation to a major proposal and other proposals which they consider may be of interest to Members. The relevant Members are the Ward Member(s) and Members of the Development Control Committee responsible for other areas.
- 1.4 Members attending pre-application discussions must have attended a training session on conduct at pre-application discussions.

2.0 Attendance of Councillors at Meetings with Developers

- 2.1 Members of the Council, where necessary, can attend pre-application meetings with developers, about major applications, but only when at least one officer is present. Generally however, there will need to be more than one officer present to enable accurate notes to be made of the meeting.
- 2.2 The timing of these meetings will need to be carefully considered; involvement at an early stage will be essential. For certain applications involvement at other stages would be beneficial and a schedule of involvement may need to be agreed with developers.
- 2.3 At the start of the meeting the officer will make it clear that the role of the Member is to listen to the discussion, identify issues that the developer will need to consider and represent community interests, but that it will not be possible for the Member to enter into negotiations or express a view on the proposal, as they need to balance all material considerations before reaching a decision on an application. It will be made clear that the reason for this is to ensure that a Member does not pre-determine their position at any subsequent Committee meeting.
- 2.4 If at any point in the discussions the developer presses the Member to take part in negotiations or express a view, the officer will remind the meeting of the role of the Councillor.

- 2.5 The Officer will, within 10 working days from the date of the meeting, produce detailed notes of the meeting. This will note those present, the issues identified at the pre-application discussions, and the actions to be taken. These notes will be circulated for approval to the Member attendees and after confirmation of accuracy by all those who attended, forwarded to the applicant.

3.0 Presentation of Pre-application proposals by developers to Development Control Committee

- 3.1 If a proposal is particularly significant, or has more than just local implications, a developer will be invited by officers to make a presentation to Members of the Development Control Committee, together with the appropriate ward member/s. Generally this will not be a public meeting.
- 3.2 A developer will be advised of the time available for their presentation and will be expected to keep strictly to this programme.
- 3.3 There will always be an officer/s in attendance at the presentation.
- 3.4 At the start of the presentation the Chairman of Development Control Committee (or Vice-Chairman) will make it clear that Members will listen to the presentation, will identify issues that the developer will need to consider further, represent community interests and ask questions, but that it will not be possible for Members to enter into negotiations or express a view as they will need to balance all material considerations before reaching a formal decision on an application. It will be made clear that the reason for this is to ensure that a Member does not pre-determine their view.
- 3.5 If at any point the developer presses for a view or seeks to negotiate with Members, the Chairman/Vice -Chairman will remind everyone present of what they said at the start of the meeting.
- 3.6 After the presentation the officer will make a detailed note of the presentation and discussion within 10 working days. The developer should provide the officer with any presentation material to assist with this. This minute will be placed upon a public file.