



LOOE TOWN COUNCIL

PLANNING PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION POLICY

The following guidance notes and statements determine the Town Council's Policy regarding planning pre-application meetings for major developments.

Guidance for Councillors and developers:

Looe Town Council recognises that pre-application discussions play an important role in major planning applications and welcomes the desire of developers 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, Councillors are reminded of the critical importance of not predetermining 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.

Individual Councillor's responsibilities:

1. To carefully consider the public perception of their comments.
2. To avoid any appearance of collusion in applications likely to cause controversy.
3. To avoid accepting hospitality in connection with any application.
4. Councillors must **not** purport to be representing the Council, unless expressly authorised to do so by the Council.

Pre application briefings:

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

1. Full public consultation is either already scheduled or firmly planned.
2. 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 (for example a strong commercial sensitivity, where a developer wishes to receive a initial steer before deciding whether to progress).

Pre-application public consultations:

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

1. An accessible and convenient venue.
2. Sufficient publicity to likely interested parties, in good time.
3. Appropriate timings to allow as wide a range of people as possible to attend.
4. A genuinely open mind and willingness to adapt plans in response to feedback.

Pre-Determination

Councillors should avoid expressing any detailed opinion or prior view which might be viewed as pre-determination. To this end, a formal meeting arranged by Looe 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 I/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 Looe Town Council attending are not pre-determining their position on a proposal. 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 pre-judging a proposal in advance of a formal planning application.

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

Adopted by Looe Town Council 2nd March 2020.