

Southbourne Parish Council

Policy on Engaging in Early Discussions on Development Projects

1. Early discussions are welcomed between developers or their representatives and Councillors and/or nominated representatives¹ from Southbourne Parish Council on proposed major developments. These need to be set within the context of the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan (SPNP) and developers should ensure that they are familiar with its policies before requesting a meeting. Whether the Council accepts the request may, however, depend on whether development complies, in principle, with the SPNP policies. Where there is no immediate likelihood of planning permission being granted, then the Council may decline a request.
2. The main purpose of such a meeting is to learn more about the development proposal and its implications, not to form a view or make a decision. However, should a view or opinion be expressed, this will not bind the Parish Council to making a decision. Also, where no views are expressed this should *not* be seen as implicit support for the proposal. A developer shall not make any comment or claim about the Parish Council's actual or perceived position in planning applications or in any other documents relating to proposed developments in the parish without the agreement of the Parish Council.
3. Where the Parish Council agrees to meet a developer this decision should be minuted. If there is insufficient time to enable the Parish Council to consider such a request at one of its meetings, the Chairman, in consultation with the Vice-Chairman and the Chairman of the Parish Planning Committee, has delegated authority to respond on the Parish Council's behalf. This decision and the content of any meeting that may take place shall be noted at the next Council meeting.
4. A Planning Officer from Chichester District Council will usually be invited.
5. The Clerk or a District Council Planning Officer shall normally make the arrangements for such a meeting, attend and write up any notes. The format and length should be agreed beforehand and be limited to the development proposal. Meetings will normally take place at a public venue such as the village hall or at the District Council offices.
6. The meeting will be chaired by a Parish Councillor or other representative of the Parish Council, who will set out the house rules. If Parish Councillors are present the Chairman will explain the councillors' role, including the important point that provided councillors approach the discussions with an open mind they can do so without fear of being accused of bias or facing legal challenge.
7. Individual councillors or other representatives of the Parish Council will not enter into separate discussions with developers.

¹ Usually a member (or members) of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

8. No hospitality shall be offered by a developer and none will be accepted by any representative of the Parish Council.

Adopted 14 March 2017

Review February 2019