

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL



ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSION POLICY

April 2022

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Reviewed 8th April 2024

To be reviewed 8th April 2026

PLANNING PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSION POLICY

Introduction

Applicants are encouraged to enter into pre-application discussions with the planning authority, relevant stakeholders and the community prior to the submission of a formal planning application.

This policy sets out how the Town Council will consider planning pre-application discussions not only to respect the interest of the applicant but also to preserve and enhance the interests of its residents. It details how the Town Council's views shall be communicated to the planning authority, stakeholders, applicants and the community.

The Town Council's involvement in pre-applications discussions

As a statutory consultee in the planning process it is desirable for the Town Council to be involved in the pre-application process for the following reasons:

- It has a good understanding of its area and the community.
- It is keen to ensure growth within the town is of the right type in the right location.
- It provides an advocacy role for its residents, effectively representing their views when they feel they are unable to.
- The Town Council may be a party to S106 negotiations on community assets required for the town.

Pre-application discussions directly with the Town Council

The Town Council will normally approach pre-application discussions in the following way:

- The applicant contacts the Town Council directly to obtain the view of the Town Council as a body. Discussions will consist of a presentation to the whole Town Council at a Town Council meeting.
- The applicant contacts the Town Council directly to seek the informal opinion of individual councillors. The Councillor will not express a view that could be thought of as the view of the Town Council and will report to the next available meeting that they have been approached and their response will be recorded.

Pre-application discussions through Shropshire Council

Shropshire Council offers applicants a formal pre-application process and will charge a fee for the service.

Should the Town Council be approached for its opinion these will be considered on individual merits depending and whether discussions are to be confidential.

Confidentiality

The Town Council understands there may be sometimes a need for applicants to seek confidential discussions with the Town Council. The Town Council is mindful of its duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the need to ensure that as much information is available to the public as possible.

As a general rule all pre-applications will be considered by the Town Council in the public domain however the following occasions will be the exception:

- Shropshire Council, having processed the pre-application is satisfied that the application meets the provisions of the Public Interest Test and should remain confidential, will make that decision known to the Town Council. The Town Council will be guided by Shropshire Council on its approach to the discussions.
- The applicant has provided a compelling argument that the application is commercially sensitive, and disclosure of information would either prejudice or adversely affect future contract negotiations/transaction.

No other reasons will be considered to exclude members of the public and press thus rendering the documents relating to the application confidential.

Meetings

The Town Clerk should be present with Councillors in pre-application meetings. The Clerk should make clear that discussions will not bind the Council to making any particular decision and that any views expressed by Councillors are personal and provisional. By the very nature of such meetings not all relevant information may be at hand, nor will formal consultations with interested parties have taken place. Written notes should be made of all meetings (and phone conversations). Notes should record issues raised and advice given.