



## **PROTOCOL FOR PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE AND FEEDBACK**

Highworth Town Council welcomes early engagement with Applicants on major or complex planning proposals. This supports the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which encourages Applicants to engage with the local community prior to the submission of a planning application. The Town Council represents all sections of the community, including residents, interested groups and businesses,

Applicants are expected to comply with the Development Plan which comprises of the policies set out in our adopted HIGHWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN and SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCILS LOCAL PLAN.

In all meetings with developers, Councillors are aware of the critical importance of not pre-determining their position on any future planning application as this could require them to take no part in the discussion. Expressing a pre-disposition, such as “welcome in principle” or “having concerns”, is permissible.

The Council is, in general, willing to hold meetings with developers prior to the submission of a planning application on the following condition:

- 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 an initial steer before deciding whether to progress).

The Council prefers developers to make presentations at scheduled meetings of its Planning Committee.

If a specially called meeting is required, then Council will expect the consulting developer to pay for the venue.

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

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

**Applicants seeking pre-application engagement should:**

1. Contact the Town Clerk via email [clerk@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk) at the earliest opportunity so that arrangements for pre-application engagement can be put in place.
2. The Town Clerk will provide dates of scheduled Planning Meetings and a date will be agreed.
3. The Applicant will make a Presentation to the Planning Committee. Allowance will be made for a 10 minute presentation to members of The Council. This should comprise of no more than 2 persons. We will then allow time for Councillors to ask questions. Following this meeting we will provide a letter, setting out our feedback to the Applicant. A copy of this will be sent to the Planning Department at Swindon Borough Council in their capacity as the Local Planning Authority if an application comes forward.
4. The Applicant will hold a Public Consultation prior to the submission of a Planning Application.

We will expect the submitted planning application for the development proposal to be accompanied by a Statement of Community Engagement. Any feedback received from the Public Consultation Event must be shared with The Town Council.

**Applicants seeking pre-application engagement should not consider this conduct as implied or explicit approval for any proposal.**

**The Applicant should approach the Clerk in the first instance and avoid contact with individual Councillors.**

Date of statement 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024