



Morpeth
Town
Council

THE ROLE OF LOCAL COUNCILS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

The role of Local Councils in the planning process goes beyond acting as the eyes and ears of their local communities. They can influence decisions and policies, develop a town plan, identify available sites for affordable housing or lead community engagement in implementation projects. When determining planning applications a local council should work closely with the Planning Authority to deliver new development and local services which provide the best deal for the local community.

THE ROLE OF A LOCAL COUNCIL

**By being a key stakeholder in pre-application discussions/
presentations within the town.**

Recent Government legislation actively encouraged pre-application discussions as an integral part of the development management system. Developers are strongly encouraged to consult with local communities and Local Councils as early as possible prior to developing their planning applications for formal submission. This method of consultation will vary relative to the scale of the development. For example, a householder extension should involve discussions with immediate neighbours, whilst a major development should involve consultation meetings with the Local Council and local residents.

Pre-application engagement with the community and Local Councils helps to address site specific issues that the community may have, such as design and access, the height of buildings, or a need for a particular type of development in the locality.

Pre-application discussions for more significant proposals should be undertaken at an early stage in the development of the project. This enables the scheme to evolve in response to comments and representations before the application is formally submitted for determination.

All pre – application discussions are on a “Without Prejudice” basis.

By facilitating development within the town.

Local Councils can take a proactive role in facilitating developments that will meet the needs of their community through close working relationships with the local planning authority. The Local Council can, for example, use their knowledge to help identify landowners to enable affordable housing development where there is an identified local need; and they can establish the evidence base for any identified local housing need and for community infrastructure needs through parish questionnaires.

Through the development of an evolving town or parish plan.

A parish plan is in the ownership of its community. It identifies the needs and aspirations of all groups within it, with its purpose to shape and determine the future of the community. A robust parish plan will involve the whole community, will provide an action plan for the future and will be regularly reviewed and updated.

The Town or Parish Plan needs to address:-

The preferred location, the scale and type of future development of :-

Housing

Business

Industrial

Retail

Schools

Health

Other Community Facilities

Green Spaces or Woodland (protection of)

As a consultee on planning applications.

Local Councils will be consulted on all planning applications relevant to their area. Local Councils can present their case at the Planning Committee Meetings.

Through monitoring and review.

Development Management is an evolving process with a policy context that is flexible and evidence based. However, this process will not evolve unless it is effectively monitored and reviewed. Local Councils can play a proactive role in monitoring and reviewing the developments in their areas and informing their opinions back into the policy process.

By being involved in suggestions for Section 106 / Planning Gain / Community Infrastructure Levy

The County Council can enter into a Section 106 agreement, otherwise known as a 'planning obligation or planning gain, with a developer where it is necessary to provide contributions to offset negative impacts caused by construction and development.

Examples of contributions range from the provision of affordable homes, road improvements, town enhancements, creation of new open space, funding of school places or employment training schemes. A local council can recommend or submit ideas for such contributions.

The developer will either implement these or make payments to the County Council for them to be carried out. All Section 106 agreements must be relevant to the development they relate to.

Contributions under Section 106 proposals will be identified and discussed before the submission of a planning application. Any pre – planning discussions relating to Section 106 or “planning gain” are on a “without prejudice” basis.

PRE PLANNING CONSULTATIONS & PRESENTATION PROTOCOL

The aim is to make this an integral part of the process in determining the largest and most sensitive planning applications such that Community consultation takes place early and is an effective part of the process. Consultation is important to achieve high quality sustainable developments. Continued dialogue and participation is recognised as key to effective delivery of developments.

It is the responsibility of the developer to arrange and carry out any pre-application consultation.

All planning related presentations or discussions made to Morpeth Town Council are on a “WITHOUT PREJUDICE” basis.

RECOMMENDATION

Morpeth Town Council agrees to adopt the above protocol relating to pre - planning presentations or consultations.