

PROTOCOL FOR PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATIONS ON MAJOR APPLICATIONS

At the request of a prospective developer/agent and subject to the agreement of the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the pre app panel and Chair of Plans Committee, arrangements will be made for them to present their proposals to Members at a meeting of the Pre app panel. There will usually be only one opportunity to make a presentation to the Panel per proposal.

The Presentation would be chaired by the Chair of Plans Committee who will explain the role of Members at the meeting.

The Lead Member for Planning, all members of the Plans Committee and affected ward members will be invited to sit on the Panel. The appropriate Officers that will contribute to determination of the application will be in attendance but the meeting will not be open to the general public.

Developers will be given the opportunity to make a presentation that should describe their proposal and should explain how the proposal relates to both relevant national and local policy, how it meets local needs and preferences and any other material considerations that they believe Members should give weight to.

The format and length of the presentation should be agreed beforehand and should be limited to the development proposal. They should not normally last longer than 30 minutes.

The role of the Members at the meeting is to learn about the emerging proposal, identify outstanding issues to be dealt with but not to form or express a view on the proposal which would pre-determine their participation in making a decision on any formal application.

Members will be able to ask questions following the presentation but must refrain from entering into debate directly with the applicant or giving advice that indicates a pre-judging of the proposals.

Members must maintain an impartial listening role and avoid expressing an opinion to the applicants. Questions and comments should focus upon clarifying aspects of the proposal or to flag up issues of concern but must not develop into negotiations. It is equally important at this stage for Members not to have closed minds as to the merits of the proposal.

After the applicants have left the meeting, Members can then discuss with officers any concerns or issues and comment on the future direction of any officer/developer negotiations.

Notes will be taken at the meeting and a summary of the discussions will be kept on file.

Additional Notes for Members

Any Member who elects to form a view, for or against the development being discussed, will pre-determine their stance to the extent that they will be required to withdraw from meetings where any subsequently submitted application is discussed or decided.

Once a formal planning application has been submitted it would be inappropriate for Members who would be considering the specific application to hold any further discussions with developers or receive any further presentations.

Additional Notes for Developers/Agents

Discussions will not bind Torridge District Council as local planning authority. This will be made clear at the outset of each meeting. Similarly it will be made clear that views expressed are not part of the determination process and that any statements are “without prejudice” to the eventual determination of an application.

The presentation can provide any relevant background information to give context to the proposal, but it should focus primarily on issues that are relevant to the planning process.

Notes will be taken at the meeting of the Pre App Panel and will be attached to the planning file when a formal planning application for the proposal is submitted .