



Okehampton Town Council

Developer Engagement Policy (Planning)

1. Policy Statement

This policy is designed to clarify how Okehampton Town Council will engage with developers and/or their agents, both prior to, and following, the submission of a planning application within the town. This policy will inform Councillors and Officers when arranging discussions with developers.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors and Employees. This policy also applies to all stages of the development cycle including speculative queries and during the consultation phase. Okehampton Town Council will not be offering advice on Planning Policy or formal view at such presentations.

3. Pre-Planning Application Developer Meeting Guidelines

The Town Council recognises that pre-application discussions play an important role in major planning applications and welcomes the desire of developers to consult both with Okehampton Town Council and the wider community. Okehampton Town Council is also aware of the importance of public perception in planning and the need to avoid any appearance that Okehampton Town Council is conducting secretive negotiations or is colluding with developers. It is important therefore that such pre-application discussions are undertaken appropriately and transparently.

Okehampton Town Council, where possible, accommodate requests from developers to present their pre-application proposals at a Council or other arranged meeting prior to public consultation on the following three conditions:

Individual Councillors may be approached by developers for informal discussion and this is to be approached with caution and, in all instances, notified to the Clerk. Councillors must make it clear they are not representing Okehampton Town Council at any time except in the appropriate meeting, unless expressly authorised to do so.

3.1 Pre-application planning discussions, communications and any comment given by the Town Council will not bind the Town Council to making a particular decision and any views expressed will be without prejudice and based on the information available at the time.

3.2 Where possible, meetings will be normally before a meeting of the Planning Committee, and as a preference be open to the public. A record of meetings with developers on site and/or outside of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council will be made and reported to the next Council meeting. Should developers not wish to attend a meeting open to the public, a closed meeting may be arranged.

3.3 Developers will be sent a copy and asked to acknowledge receipt and their understanding of this policy.

4. Post submission of a Planning Application

Following the submission of an application, any discussions with developers should be held as open sessions during a Planning Committee Meeting.

5. Construction Phase

There are many issues that arise during the construction phase, from amendments to plans, disputes with neighbours and highways issues. A Councillor may, on the instruction of Council or the Planning Committee, act as a representative to feedback on such issues.

6. Advertising of meetings with developers

Okehampton Town Council will use the publication of Agendas to notify local residents of meetings in the normal way. Where a meeting is closed, the appropriate Agenda will still state the meeting time and date and developer/agent name.