

WINCANTON TOWN COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT ON PLANNING

Introduction

Local planning applications are submitted to the Local Planning Authority (i.e. South Somerset District Council (SSDC) where a decision has to be reached whether to give or refuse permission for development. Town and Parish Councils are notified of any planning application in their area. The Town or Parish Council is looking for local views and effects, the Parish council can only RECOMMEND approval or refusal, it is a recommendation only, all final decisions are taken by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority notifies all interested parties directly by letter of any Planning application and return correspondence is asked to be sent directly back to the Local Planning Authority.

Therefore the purpose of this document is to detail the procedures to be taken by Wincanton Town Council when considering recommendations on planning applications.

Planning Policy Statement

The Wincanton Town Council will look at each planning application on its own merits. In making its comments, the Town Council will recommend for approval only those plans which are sustainable, family friendly, support local businesses and preserve the nature and character of Wincanton and its environs. The Council will recommend that all new build multiple developments respect the environment and are carbon neutral. Additionally, public consultation will be encouraged on all major developments that affect the town of Wincanton and its local area of responsibility.

Checklist

In order to ensure all relevant aspects of a planning application are considered, the Planning Officer will present the application in accordance with a checklist. This checklist will be agreed by the Town Council Planning Officer and the Town Clerk.

Planning Database

A planning database should be maintained. The purpose of the database is to enable councillors to be informed on any history regarding an application, and any decisions made by the Local Planning Authority on that application or similar applications.

Engaging the Public

Every effort will be made to engage with the applicant and the public when considering a planning application. To achieve this, the Town Council Planning Officer will inform the applicant/agent when that application is scheduled to be discussed by the Council.

Conduct of the Meeting

It is important that the views of the public are heard when a planning application is under consideration; however, this must be managed.

At the start of a meeting the Chairman should advise the public of the procedures to be followed and invite those members of the public who wish to speak on a planning application to register.

The registration form shall ask for the speakers name, the planning application they wish to speak on, and whether for or against the application.

The consideration of a planning application should hereby follow the following format:

- a. The Planning Officer will present the application to the agreed check list.
- b. Members of the public are invited to speak in the following order:
 - i) The applicant or representative.
 - ii) Those supporting the application.
 - iii) Those against the application.
- c. Members of the public should be limited to speaking for a maximum of 3 minutes each. However, If the application has attracted wide attention; the Chairman may exercise discretion to limit the speakers to the applicant, plus 2 in support and 2 against.
- d. Each speaker should be restricted to 3 minutes. Additional time may be permitted at the discretion of the Chairman
- e. Members of the public **shall not** join in any council debate on the planning application unless further clarification is required by the council.
- f. Council members should be permitted to question each speaker for clarification only if required. The time for such questioning should normally be restricted to 3 minutes but may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman.
- g. Following the public consultation, councillor's should have the opportunity to comment on the application.
- h. Summary by the Chairman and invite a proposition from the council.

Outside Wincanton Town Council Representation

The Council will appoint a member to represent its views on a planning application that is forwarded to the SSDC Area East Planning Committee, Regulation Committee or The Planning Inspectorate for resolution or any other such body deemed appropriate.