



BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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Policy: Pre-Application Meetings with Developers

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Introduction

Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council (the 'Council') acknowledge that developers may wish to present proposals at different planning application stages to the Council to seek its views and that pre-application discussions play an important role in major developments.

The Council welcomes the desire of developers to consult both the Council and the local community more widely. However, the Council is also aware of the importance of public perception in planning and the critical need to avoid any appearance that the Council is conducting secretive negotiations or colluding with developers.

In order to avoid improper lobbying by a developer or creating a perception that the Council have a predetermined position about a proposed development, the Full Council shall discuss in an open meeting any approach to meet with an individual, developer, or their agent ('the Developer'), to discuss a pre-application development.

The Council will meet confidentially with developers only in circumstances where this was unavoidable due to commercial sensitivity. Developers will be encouraged to hold public meetings and the Council's default position will be to meet with developers in open meetings.

If agreed the Full Council shall resolve thereafter to invoke the following procedure:

1. The Developer shall confirm the level of confidentiality of the documents provided and the reason for the confidentiality
2. The Full Council shall offer to meet with the Developer, by default position, in Open session. Closed session meetings will only be granted by exception and with specific prior agreement of the Parish Council.
3. The Council can resolve to delegate the NDP Steering Group to meet with developers to ensure, for example, that site design, housing mix and community facilities funded by s106 contributions meet the needs of the community. Outcomes of the meeting shall be reported to the Parish Council at the next Full Council meeting, if necessary under a Closed Session.
4. The Agenda item pertaining to the Closed Session shall identify the location of the proposed development
5. Councillors shall be provided, via the Clerk, with all documents provided by the Developer and these shall be deemed confidential under specific basis
6. A motion to exclude the public shall be moved by the Chair at the relevant Full Council meeting and this shall identify and clarify the reason for any confidentiality
7. The Minutes of the Closed Session shall state attendees and general description of the reason for the meeting.
8. No indication of a position shall be inferred by the Council's agreement to meet with a Developer and the Council shall not be bound to meet further with the Developer in Closed Session
9. No resolutions shall be passed in the Closed Session