



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall

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GILLINGHAM

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DRAFT PLANNING PROTOCOL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT 2023

Planning applications for the town of Gillingham made to Dorset Council are referred to the Town Council as a consultee. Set out below is how the Town Council considers and responds to applications.

1. Declarations of Interest

Individual Councillors must:

- 1.01 Declare any direct or indirect pecuniary interests in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.02 Withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is being discussed and voted upon if a pecuniary interest is declared.

Councillors must not:

- 1.03 Act as an agent for people pursuing planning matters within the Council.

2. Lobbying and access to Councillors

Prior to the applications being considered at the Planning Committee meeting, all members of the Council and in particular Planning Committee members, should treat planning matters as follows:

- 2.01 Act in the public interest with regards to planning matters and not individual constituents or particular interest.
- 2.02 Act fairly and openly and determine each application on its own merits.
- 2.03 Report any approaches by lobbyists and any representations made to the Town Clerk or Planning Committee Clerk.
- 2.04 Make it clear that Councillors are not be in a position to make a recommendation on a particular application until you have heard all the evidence at the Planning Committee meeting.
- 2.05 Refer any request to attend or organise a meeting to discuss a planning proposal that has yet to be submitted to the Town Clerk or Planning Committee Clerk.

3. Planning Committee members must treat Planning matters as follows:

- 3.01 Listen to the views expressed.
- 3.02 Seek factual information about the progress of a case.
- 3.03 Advise those who are lobbying to write or speak to the Town Clerk or Planning Committee Clerk.
- 3.04 Keep an open mind and be willing to listen to all the arguments, representations and evidence presented at the Planning Committee meeting.
- 3.05 Determine each planning application on its own merits and in accordance with planning policies.
- 3.06 Ensure that recommendations are based on relevant planning policies.
- 3.07 Not predetermine or judge a planning application until all relevant information has been received at the Planning Committee meeting.

4. Planning Committee members must not:

- 4.01 Give ground to doubt their impartiality.
- 4.02 Use their position improperly for personal gain or to advantage any individual or group, including relatives, friends or close associates.
- 4.03 Lobby for a particular outcome on a planning application.
- 4.04 Meet developers alone or put themselves in a position where they appear to favour a person, company or group.
- 4.05 Take payment, or reward in kind to lobby the Council on a planning matter.
- 4.06 Do anything which compromises, or which is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or work on behalf of, the Town Council.

5. Site Visit Protocol

- 5.01 Site visits may be arranged at the discretion of the Planning Committee Chairman.
- 5.02 During the site visit, Councillors are advised not to openly engage in discussion with residents or interested parties and be mindful of sections 2, 3 and 4.
- 5.03 Any hospitality should be politely declined.
- 5.04 Site visits by individuals are discouraged due to reasons of personal safety and integrity.

6. Tree and associated matters

- 6.01 The appointed Tree Warden representing Gillingham Town Council must not enter land without prior permission of the landowner. Trees should be viewed from a public viewpoint in order to protect the personal safety and integrity of the Warden.

7. Rights of Way Liaison Officer representing Gillingham Town Council

- 7.01 The Rights of Way Liaison Officer should be mindful of their personal safety and abide by their guidance document provided by Dorset Council.

8. Review

This document was approved and adopted at the Planning Committee meeting on Monday 12th June 2023, Minute no. 603 and ratified by Full Council on 26th June 2023.

Policy reviews will be carried out annually or when there are changes to current legislation, whichever is the sooner.

Signed by the Mayor of Gillingham:

Date: