

PLANNING CONSULTATION POLICY

1 Introduction

Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Bassett Parish Council (“the Council”) is the first tier of local government and plays an important advisory role in the planning system.

This policy explains, in clear and accessible language, how the Council considers planning applications, how residents can engage with the process, and how decisions and representations are made. It is intended to ensure that the Council’s approach to planning is **transparent, consistent, fair, and based on planning law and policy**.

The Council does **not** make planning decisions. Decisions are made by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Wiltshire Council. However, the Council’s views are an important part of the decision-making process, particularly where they are grounded in local knowledge and material planning considerations.

This policy aligns with:

- National Association of Local Councils (NALC) guidance
- Wiltshire Council planning procedures
- The Council’s Code of Conduct
- Local Government Association (LGA) guidance on probity in planning

2 What this policy covers

This policy explains:

- The Council’s role in the planning process
- How planning applications are handled and responded to
- How residents can make representations
- How decisions and votes are taken
- Standards of conduct, impartiality, and probity
- What the Council can and cannot take into account

It applies to all parish councillors, the Parish Clerk, and any delegated officers involved in planning matters.

3 The Council’s role in planning

The Council may **support, object to, or comment** on planning applications submitted within the parish.

In doing so, the Council:

- Represents local views and concerns
- Considers how applications fit with the Development Plan, including:
 - Wiltshire Local Plan
 - Made or emerging Neighbourhood Development Plans
- Raises material planning considerations that may not be apparent to the LPA

Planning decisions are normally made by Wiltshire Council planning officers under delegated powers. In cases of significant local interest, the Wiltshire Councillor covering this parish may request that an application is “called in” for consideration by a planning committee rather than by officers.

4 Making residents aware of planning applications

The Council is committed to openness and community awareness.

To support this:

- All planning applications received by the Council will be published on the Parish Council website
- This is to help residents become aware of proposals and make their own representations to Wiltshire Council

The Council does **not** directly notify neighbours, as this is the responsibility of the applicant under planning law. Residents are welcome to approach councillors to discuss planning matters.

5 How the Council considers planning applications

5.1 Distribution and review

- The Parish Clerk (or a delegated officer) will circulate planning applications to all councillors
- The Parish Clerk (or a delegated officer) will publish the planning applications to the Parish Council web site.
- Councillors are individually responsible for reviewing applications and identifying material planning considerations

5.2 Timescales

- A clear deadline 10 days before planning consultation deadline will be set for councillors to submit comments
- This allows sufficient time to receive representation from residents, resolve differences of view and agree a collective response

5.3 Formulating a response

- The Chair (or a delegated councillor) is responsible for drafting a proposed Council response

- This draft will be circulated to councillors in advance of the consultation deadline

5.4 Meetings and decisions

- Where the consultation deadline falls **after** scheduled Parish Council meeting, the application will normally be discussed and resolved at that meeting
- Where the consultation deadline falls **before** scheduled meeting, the matter may be discussed and resolved by email
- Any councillor may request that the Chair considers calling an Extraordinary Planning Meeting; this remains at the Chair's discretion

5.5 Voting

- The Council's response is agreed by a majority vote
- In the event of a tie, the Chair has a casting vote

6 Recording decisions

The Parish Clerk (or delegated officer) will ensure that:

- Minutes clearly summarise the planning issues discussed
- Any proposals and votes are accurately recorded
- The agreed response is submitted to Wiltshire Council within the consultation period

7 Representing residents' views

The Council's response should reflect local views as accurately and fairly as possible.

Where:

- A small number of residents have raised objections or concerns, and
- The Council does not believe there is sufficient planning reason to object

The Council will still:

- Record that residents have raised material planning considerations
- Summarise those considerations accurately in its response

The Council may reach a different planning judgement from individual residents, but will not ignore or misrepresent their views.

8 Standards of conduct and probity

Planning decisions can be contentious. Councillors must act impartially and be seen to act impartially.

8.1 Private discussions

- Councillors may have private conversations with residents
- Where these could reasonably be seen to influence decision-making, they should be declared
- If permission is given by a resident, relevant information should be shared with the Council
- If information cannot be shared and a reasonable person would see a risk of bias, the councillor should step aside from the decision

8.2 Interests and impartiality

- Where previous events or relationships involving an applicant could reasonably be seen as affecting impartiality, councillors should consider stepping aside
- If a councillor has a personal or household planning application, then they should also declare an interest and step aside.
- Councillors must follow the Council's Code of Conduct at all times

Guidance on predetermination, predisposition, bias, and impartiality is set out in the Local Government Association's *Probity in Planning* guidance.

9 Material planning considerations

Only **material planning considerations** may be taken into account when commenting on planning applications.

Examples include (this is not exhaustive):

- National and local planning policy
- Neighbourhood Development Plans (made or emerging)
- Design, scale, layout, and impact on character of the area
- Traffic, access, parking, and highway safety
- Impact on neighbours (overlooking, loss of light, noise)
- Heritage assets, conservation areas, and listed buildings
- Trees, hedgerows, ecology, and biodiversity
- Flood risk, drainage, and pollution
- Public rights of way
- Availability of infrastructure and services
- Planning history of the site
- Protection of valued community facilities

Some matters are **not** material considerations, including:

- Loss of private views
- Impact on property values
- Personal disputes or boundary issues
- Identity or motives of the applicant
- Competition between businesses
- Matters controlled by other legislation

10 Submitting the Council's response

All agreed responses are submitted via the Wiltshire Council Planning Portal within the statutory consultation period.

Residents are encouraged to submit their own comments directly to Wiltshire Council, as individual representations carry weight alongside the Council's views.

11 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years to ensure it remains compliant with the latest legislation and the needs of the Parish Council.

12 Contact details

If you have any questions about this planning policy, please contact our Clerk:

Parish Clerk: Peter Barry

Address: The Old Coffee House, Broad Hinton, SN4 9PQ

Email: clerk@bhwbparkcouncil.org.uk

Phone: 07860 407585

Adopted by the Council: 6 January 2025

Chairman: _____ Date: _____