

Planning Assessment Committee - Commenting on planning applications

Background

The Parish Council has a statutory right to be consulted on planning applications in its area but the decision rests with Stroud District Council which is the designated Planning Authority for this area. The majority of decisions are delegated to the planning officers although more important and controversial decisions can be made by the District Council Planning Committee. Applicants have a right of appeal to central government against refusal of planning permission.

The Parish Council isn't there to act as a surrogate planning committee – our role is to inform and add value to the decision making process. In particular we can:

- Provide local knowledge and background which planning officers may not be aware of
- Provide a conduit for local opinion and community concerns
- Keep an eye to ensure that proper procedures and agreed policies are being followed
- Alert the local community to particular issues of concern arising from planning applications

Whilst we are free to make any comments we like on applications only relevant planning matters will be taken into account.

Relevant questions to ask when considering an applications are:

- Is this consistent with the policies in the Council's approved local plan and the Chalford Village Design Statement?
- Is the application in a conservation area or affecting a listed building?
- What will be its impact on traffic and highway safety?
- Will it cause problems for neighbours of loss of privacy and overlooking?
- Is the extent or scale of the development in keeping with the immediate area?
- Is the design, appearance, materials and layout appropriate for the area?
- Will it result in loss of open space or amenity?
- Will it cause unacceptable noise, disturbance and smells?
- Will there be potential problems with drainage, flooding and water run-off?

Issues that are not relevant in planning terms are:

- Effect on surrounding property values
- Loss of people's views resulting from the development
- Possible future development not included in the current application
- Private property rights such as boundary disputes
- Matters covered by other laws
- The identity or reputation of the developer, applicant or land owner

The process

1. The Clerk will send you details of the planning applications to be considered at next the meeting of the PAC.
2. You can review each application in detail on the Stroud Council website. www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/planning-and-building-control by typing in the reference number into the 'search planning applications' box.
3. Look at the plans and relevant documents to understand the proposal in three dimensions'
4. In most cases it is useful to visit the site to get a better feel for the likely impact on the immediate setting and neighbours.
5. Look at the Stroud Local Plan to understand the current policy for this type of development. This can be reviewed on-line on the SDC website under Planning Policy. The Chalford Village Design Statement is also relevant. Both documents are available in hard copy at the Parish Centre.
6. Attend the meeting fully briefed to take part in discussion of the application.

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