

PROCESS FOR THE REVIEW OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Background

South Somerset District Council (SSDC) is the decision-making authority for planning applications originating in the parish of Brympton. Whilst Brympton Parish Council cannot decide on applications, it is given the opportunity to provide comments and observations to the Planning Officer and to the Planning Committee of SSDC. Parish Council inputs are taken into account - as are individual submissions - in the deliberations of the Planning Committee.

Because the impact of planning applications on the community can be great, it is important that the Parish Council reviews all applications.

The following description indicates the process that Councillors are currently following.

Principles and Process

1. A Comprehensive Review Process.

The Parish Council reviews every planning application and decides whether to support it or object to it. Where appropriate, it may also offer comments and observations.

2. Making the Community aware of Planning Applications.

Identifiable, immediate neighbours of the application are usually sent a formal notice by SSDC. Since January 2004 the Parish Council also publishes a list of all applications on the Parish web site and the decision made by SSDC. It should be noted that this list can only reflect those applications actually received by the Parish Clerk.

General awareness of applications is important as it enables individuals to express views in their own right to SSDC.

3. Being punctual The views of the Parish Council on individual applications will be submitted to SSDC according to the deadlines set by SSDC.

4. **Access to Parish Council Input.** Any input provided to SSDC concerning a particular application will be available for public inspection at the District Council offices at Petters Way, together with all the other individual comments that are submitted. Interested parties are encouraged to review the entire body of comments provided.
5. **General Approach to Applications.** The Parish Council wishes to provide the greatest degree of freedom possible to property owners and will usually only object in the light of limitations arising from known Planning Policy and Practice in the area; and the widely-held views of the local community as expressed in, for example, Newslink.
6. **Review Process.** The normal procedure is that two Councillors will review the papers associated with the application and report to the next Parish Council meeting. This may involve a site meeting for Councillors, a special Council meeting or, in very exceptional circumstances, wider consultation in the Community. The nature of those consultations will be dictated by the individual case but may include discussions with residents who have concerns, consultation with skilled and experienced resources outside the Council (such as past Councillors or individuals with specific knowledge) or even a public meeting. In any case, all Councillors will be involved in the decision of such cases.

Should a response be required by SSDC before a meeting of the Parish Council, the Clerk will prepare this following consultation between two Councillors and the Chairman

All applications are reported to the next Parish Council meeting, together with any SSDC decisions received.

7. **Council Decisions.** The position of the Council on any individual application will be decided by a simple majority of Councillors. Inevitably, the decision on such topics is a matter of opinion and judgement. It should be noted that, whether the decision process is elaborate or simple, the submission to SSDC is the collective responsibility of the entire Parish Council.

Where individual residents disagree with the Council's decision, they are, of course, entitled to make their own views known directly to SSDC and are encouraged to do so.

8. **Declarations of Interest.** Each Brympton Councillor subscribes to the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Parish Councillors adopted nationally (and in Brympton) in April 2002. This includes maintaining an up-to-date record in the Register of Interests held by the Monitoring Officer at SSDC. Each Councillor will declare any relevant conflict of interest - as defined by the Code of Conduct - prior to any discussion on a matter related to that interest. Where a conflict is confirmed, the Councillor will play no part in that decision. As with all such matters, prudent judgement will be used in determining when any other less substantive interests are pertinent to a particular decision and a basis for a declaration of personal or prejudicial interest.

9. **Renewal of Planning Permissions.** Applicants are reminded that all permissions granted by the planning authority have a limited life. If the work is not carried out during that specified period, the permission will lapse and must be reapplied for. Changing circumstances or the availability of new information can mean that re-approval is not automatic.