

**DARSHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**DATE :** November 2017  
**TOPIC:** Planning Application Policy  
**BY:** Simon Manning  
**PURPOSE:** Consultation, Amendment, Agreement  
**STATUS:** Non Urgent  
**CLASSIFICATION:** CONFIDENTIAL TO COUNCILLORS  
**RESPONSE:** At Meeting

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## **PLANNING APPLICATION POLICY.**

### **Rationale and Background.**

In the recent document 'Help plan the future of the District Suffolk Coastal District Council [SCDC] identified a possible 553 additional sites for housing in the village, this has been robustly rejected by the Parish Council [PC] at its meeting of October 2017.

The village currently has 132 dwellings within it and has recently seen a development of 19 houses with a further 20 planned, this represents an increase of just under 30%. The development of an additional 20 houses, an extension of the Hopkins Homes site on The Street is a logical progression as is the development of 7 houses on the Granary Cottages site as outlined in the time line in the PC response.

The acknowledgement of these developments effectively prevents any accusation of NIMBYism.

However, there are several single house applications being made that are not within the SCDC plan and it is these we as a PC must pro-actively focus on.

### **Objective.**

To formulate and then implement a policy relating to planning applications that will be –

1. Transparent
2. Objective
3. Consistent

### **Mission Statement.**

***Darsham Parish Council has adopted the following policy in order to ensure that there is a standard procedure for considering and commenting on all planning applications that are presented to them by Suffolk Coastal District Council.***

***The Parish Council when considering applications will bear in mind the conservation and integrity of the unique village environment and strive to protect this.***

### **Introduction – the planning process.**

The PC Planning Policy is responsible for shaping development within the village and sets out the plans and policies against which planning applications are determined. The policy is based on and is an extension of the following:-

#### **National Level -**

- ❖ National Planning Policy Framework – this was published in March 2012 and replaced previous planning documents.

#### **Local Level –**

- ❖ At a Local Level there are two documents which lay out the development priorities of SCDC. The two documents are –
  - Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies.
  - Help plan the future of the District.

Although there are some exceptions anyone wishing to build must apply to SCDC for planning permission. When a local planning authority receive an application they must publicise it, this in effect means a notice that can be seen by passers-by must be posted at the site of the proposed development or occupiers and owners of adjoining properties are notified.

With applications for large developments there must also be a notice in the local newspaper.

It is current practice that SCDC will consult neighbours with a common boundary to any proposed development site, the PC and other organisations such as the local highways authority and drainage engineers. In certain cases consultation will take place with agencies that protect the rural environment.

Anyone can comment on a planning application within the timescale publicised, this is usually 21 days from the date of notice.

### **The role of the Parish Council as a consultee.**

When reviewing a planning application due consideration will be given to the following points:-

- Consistency with current development plans.
- Traffic and highway safety issues.
- Scale of the proposed development.
- Purpose of the proposed development
- Design, appearance, layout and materials to be used in the proposed development.
- Whether the proposed development overlooks other properties and creates a loss of privacy and light.

- Whether the proposed development is within the village envelope or the countryside, or in a conservation area

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**The role of the Parish Council as a consultee [conti].**

- Whether the proposed development has a detrimental impact on open space and physical features of the village.
- Whether the proposed development will create excessive noise, disturbance or smells.
- Whether the proposed development will have a detrimental impact on drainage, sewerage and road surfaces.
- Whether the proposed development will have a detrimental impact on the surroundings and the village community.

Issues that are not relevant to this process are :-

- ❖ Effect on the value of the property.
- ❖ Loss of view over other people's land.
- ❖ Possible future development not included in the application.
- ❖ Private property rights e.g. boundary issues or access rights.
- ❖ Matters covered by other laws and regulations.
- ❖ The morals or motives of the developer.

**Darsham Parish Council's Policy.**

This is in line with our Mission Statement and consists of the following points:-

- ✓ The PC will actively seek to preserve the rural character and village environment that is unique to Darsham.
- ✓ The PC will represent the majority of local interest and comments will reflect local knowledge and interest in the village environment.
- ✓ The PC will seek to ensure that any development, both new or for alterations to existing properties will be in keeping with the surrounding area.
- ✓ The PC will consider all planning applications based on their individual circumstances and merits. All responses to planning applications will be based on material planning reasons. Non-material considerations will not form any part of the response to SCDC. Site visits will be undertaken as appropriate and taken into consideration when formulating the PC response.
- ✓ Any proposal for future development will be judged against relevant planning policies and in particular be related to creating a sustainable village and agricultural environment.
- ✓ The PC will respond to all planning applications within the time frame stipulated by SCDC unless prior agreement has been given, this is the case when the deadline falls outside the annual programme PC meetings.

**Darsham Parish Council's Planning Application Procedure.**

- ✓ Notification of a planning application will, in the first instance be sent to the PC Clerk who will then alert all Councillors via email: all Councillors are 5.

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- ✓ encouraged to research each application prior to the meeting when the review will take place.
- ✓ On receiving an application Councillors should identify the location and confirm it is within the parish boundaries and note the date of the PC meeting when the application will be discussed to ensure that any site visit is carried out in advance of the meeting.

### **Darsham Parish Council's Planning Application Procedure[conti].**

- ✓ If a site visit is required Councillors should notify the Planning Officer so that arrangements can be made.
- ✓ The Planning Officer will contact the applicant/agent to arrange the visit. Where entry to the actual site is preferred the Planning Officer will seek permission to do so.
- ✓ It is advisable that a minimum of 2 Councillors be in attendance at any site visit. No Councillor should attend a site visit if they have a direct interest or are in conflict with the application.
- ✓ After the site visit the Planning Officer should prepare a summary of the application in order to brief the PC at the meeting when the application will be discussed.
- ✓ At the meeting a full discussion of the application will take place and an agreed decision made to support or not support the application.
- ✓ Following the meeting the Parish Clerk will make the formal submission to SCDC.

### **Code of practice for site visits.**

This Code of Practice provides advice for Councillors undertaking a site visit prior to considering its response as a consultee to SCDC.

Site visits are not formally constituted meetings of the PC. It is important, therefore, that no decisions are taken or seem to be taken on the application at the visit.

#### *Purpose of site visits.*

The main purposes of a site visit are to enable Councillors –

- To view a site and its surroundings to better appreciate facts that are important in the consideration of an application.
- To assist in the appraisal of any constraints and opportunities afforded by the proposed development and its impact upon surrounding land and the village.
- To provide a better understanding of any issues raised by interested parties.

#### *Procedure of site visit.*

- Site visits should be conducted with an open and common sense approach and without prejudice to the applicant.
- If the applicant/agent is/are present then Councillors will advise them they cannot discuss the application with them.

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- All the facts of the application should be in the applicants prepared design statement, a copy of which can be downloaded from the SCDC web site, along with other supporting paper work.
- Any questions resulting from the site visit should be directed to the Parish Clerk who will contact SCDC for clarification.
- Councillors undertaking a site visit should not give the applicant their views concerning the application. Comments may be misconstrued and provide the applicant with reasons to believe Councillors support the application when in reality they could be raising objections or vice versa.

#### **Code of practice for site visits [conti]**

##### *Procedure of site visit [conti]*

- When conducting site visits Councillors should have due regard to the Health & Safety [H & S] of themselves and others.
- When conducting site visits Councillors should be aware of any site H & S conditions and adhere to these.
- A site visit will enable Councillors to ask about how contractors' traffic and parking will be managed.
- Any site visits that take place should be recorded in PC minutes.

#### **Village Website**

Planning applications and associated paper work and forms are posted on the Village Web site in the Parish Council section.

Simon Manning.

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October 2017.