

# **MELKSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

## **POLICY FOR PRE-PLANNING APPLICATION MEETINGS WITH DEVELOPERS**

### **POLICY**

Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group acknowledge that developers may wish to present proposals at Pre-Planning Application stage to the Steering Group, to seek its views and that of the local community. In order to avoid improper lobbying by a developer or creating a perception that the Steering Group have a predetermined position about a proposed development, the Steering Group will follow the procedure below:

### **PROCEDURE**

1. The developer must provide information about the proposed development affecting the parish in writing.
2. If the developer considers that information provided to the Steering Group is sensitive, this will not require the Steering Group to treat it as confidential. The developer must identify information that they want to be confidential, and explain the reasons in writing. If the developer has a legitimate expectation for confidentiality about the proposed development, the Steering Group will keep a written record of the confidential and non-confidential issues.
3. Information held by the Steering Group about a proposed development is subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
4. Communications (including informal and formal meetings) between the developer and the Steering Group (or with individual Steering Group members and staff) about a pre-planning application development will not bind the Steering Group to making a particular decision. Any views expressed are, at best, provisional because not all of the relevant information will be available to the Steering Group and formal consultations will not have taken place.
5. Informal meetings and telephone conversations between a developer and individual Steering Group members or staff will be documented in writing and are subject to disclosure under the freedom of Information Act 2000. Steering Group staff will arrange and attend meetings with Steering Group members and send a follow-up in writing.
6. The meetings of the Steering Group and its committees are open to the public (Section 1(1) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) and developers may attend.
7. The developer may not speak at a Steering Group or committee meeting unless they are invited to address the meeting or do so during public

participation. The developer may regard information about the proposed development as either confidential or “sensitive” and therefore not suitable for discussion at a meeting open to the public. However, Steering Group members at the Steering Group or committee meeting will decide if there are grounds to exclude the public from the meeting when the proposed development is being discussed and considered. The Steering Group may do this if the matter being considered at the meeting would prejudice the public interest due to its confidentiality or for other special reasons (Section 1(2) Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960).

8. The minutes of the Steering Group and committee meetings which record the decisions made at them are available to all on the Steering Group Website <http://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org> or from the Melksham Without Parish Council Offices.
9. The Steering Group may invite developers to attend an assembly of the Parish meeting, which is also open to the public (Section 1(1) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960), to present or discuss their proposals for a proposed development affecting the Parish.
10. It is an offence under section 1 of the Bribery Act 2010 for a developer or their agent to promise or give a financial or other advantage to the Steering Group with the expectation of an improper consideration of a planning application. If the developer is an organisation, such as a charity or company, the Steering Group may request sight of the developer’s anti-bribery policy.

*Policy recommended and approved by Full Steering Group, 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2016.*