



Flitwick Town Council Planning Improvement Working Group

Planning Improvement Working Group

The working group will be a working group of the Town Council. The Council will set the terms of reference and membership for the working group. The working group will have no delegated authority, no budget and will make recommendations back to the Town Council.

Membership

Up to 8 Planning trained Councillors and up to 8 members of the public. Council Members will be elected at the annual statutory meeting in May of each year. Public participation will be achieved through advertising or word of mouth, with any new public members co-opted via resolution at Town Council.

Terms of Reference

When exercising its functions in relation to the development of planning proposals the working group will:

- Evaluate the benefits of developing a Neighbourhood Plan and using it to assert more control over local planning issues and to provide a stronger voice for the town in planning decisions.
- Pro-actively engage with the planning authority at all stages of the development of the Local Plan, with the intent to develop planning policies and sites that contribute to the sustainable development of the town
- Proceed in a manner that is evidence-led, collecting its own relevant evidence where applicable and feasible
- Pro-actively engage with residents at all stages of planning through means available to it
- Develop a plan to support improvements in the Town using monies that come to the Council through planning consents.

In relation to major development sites and applications, the Planning Improvement Group will:

- Engage with developers and the planning authority in a positive, open, and transparent manner, setting out clearly the Council's priorities for each site.
- Seek planning conditions and/or planning obligations where the impacts of development can be mitigated, to provide improvements that will benefit the whole town and are consistent with the Town Council's Strategy
- Generally, not support applications for major developments on greenfield sites that are not part of the approved Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, unless exceptional circumstances are proven
- Seek that adequate provision is made for schools, healthcare facilities, sustainable transport links, leisure and sport provision, cultural facilities, and local employment is made to mitigate the impact of development

- Consider applications for major developments in the Local Plan on their merits, notwithstanding any discussions that have taken place with developers or other interested parties prior to the application being submitted

When considering planning applications, the Planning Improvement Group will

- Exercise sound judgment for each application, considering each on its planning merits, and giving regard to the Town Council's objectives, the Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework
- Support applications that will ensure Flitwick will be a thriving centre for employment and leisure and are able to achieve the Town Council Strategy
- Support commercial and leisure development that re-invigorates the Town Centre and allows a night-time economy to develop
- Support additional housing as set out in the Local Plan provided it brings a range of homes necessary to meet the needs of our residents, provision for both young people and our elderly population.
- Support developments within the Town that have a reasonable percentage of affordable housing.
- Not ordinarily support the conversion of family housing into multi-occupation housing, in the areas of the town that already have a high level of economic deprivation.
- Wish to ensure that developments will provide adequate play and public space as a part of the design.
- Welcome housing (and other developments) that include energy saving and generation features.
- Wish to see the existing "Green Gap" around Flitwick maintained.
- Support the residents of villages and the Parish Councils which border Flitwick who oppose undesirable planning applications.

The Planning Improvement Working Group may be asked to look at the following types of applications before they are referred to Council by officers.

- a. Applications which are significantly contrary to the Local Plan.
- b. Applications which are submitted by members of staff directly involved in the consideration of planning applications, Councillors and Officers of the Council
- c. Applications attracting objections from statutory consultees.
- d. Applications which are submitted by Council, or which relate to land in the ownership of the Council or in which the Council has a financial interest.

Meetings of the Planning Improvement Working Group will generally not be formally minuted. The exception to this is when the group holds a meeting with an external party such as a developer, where proceedings and outcomes should be recorded (whether by formal minutes or notes). In such instances, these will be formally approved by Town Council, prior to being published on the Town Council website.