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Cam Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019 - 2031

Regulation 15 Submission Version

Appendix 2 - Cam Parish Council Pre-application Engagement Protocol

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Appendix 2 – Cam Parish Council Pre-application Engagement Protocol

This Protocol is part of the suite of documents that together form the Cam Neighbourhood Development Plan, it is also an adopted document of the Parish Council. The aim of the Protocol is to do all possible to that new development in Cam Parish can help to shape good quality places to live and work and as a means of working towards improved outcomes for the current and future communities. One particularly effective way of achieving this is through early, planned engagement with the Cam community via the Parish Council. The Protocol is also a Cam-specific version of that prepared by Stroud District Council for all parishes in the District.

Use of this Protocol is without prejudice to the eventual judgement of Cam Parish Council on the merits of any final application, even if a good engagement process has been agreed and followed.

Pre-Application community Engagement is considered to be especially important in relation to any strategic sites allocations made by Stroud District particularly with regard to any associated requirements for development briefs and masterplans that are to be approved by the District Council.

Context

National Planning Policy and Guidance

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (2019) makes several mentions of the considerable value of pre-application involvement, for example in paragraph 39:

“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”

The Planning Practice Guidance Note Design: process and tools (2019) also highlights the importance and benefits of early engagement:

“Communities can effectively shape both design policies and development through a collaborative process of meaningful participation. Early engagement and linking engagement activities to key stages of design decision-making and plan-making can empower people to inform the vision, design policies and the design of schemes.”

“It is important that local planning authorities or applicants demonstrate how all views are listened to and considered.”

Stroud District Council – Statement of Community Involvement (2019)¹

The SCI sets out the ways in which the District Council will inform, engage and consult people when formulating planning policies and considering planning applications and how feed back will be given to the community on the results. The District Council emphasises the importance of the community and other stakeholders having the opportunity to get involved and have their say.



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The "10 Commitments for Effective Pre-application Engagement"² published by a group representing planning, industry and community groups states that:

"Early, collaborative discussions between developers, public sector agencies and the communities affected by a new development can help to shape better quality, more accepted schemes and ensure improved outcomes for the community. These discussions also avoid wasted effort and costs."

This protocol applies to all development in Cam Parish. Early and effective Pre-Application community engagement is considered to be especially important in relation to any strategic site allocations made by Stroud District Council, particularly with regard to any associated requirements for development briefs and masterplans that are to be approved by the District Council. Whilst there is an emphasis on early and positive pre-application engagement in 'major development'³ proposals, it is the view of Cam Parish Council that, for their community, the above should also apply to smaller developments in the Parish because these can have at least as much impact as larger ones.

Cam Parish Council fully support and endorse all of the above and will play their appropriate role in delivering high quality pre-application engagement with themselves and the wider Cam community as proposals come forward.

Process

Drawing from the 10 Commitments and other guidance on best practice, potential applicants should work with Cam Parish Council to fulfil the following principles:

- **'Day One' contact:** By far the best results for all emerge when contact is made with our Parish Council, and through us with our local community, at the very start of any process; consulting people late with already prepared schemes is not productive.
- **Agreed Process:** A key aim of this early contact is to discuss and agree the nature, scope, timetable, information and so forth of the engagement – i.e. the process to be followed.*
- **Applicant Leadership but Shared Responsibility:** Although it is the applicant's role to lead and fund engagement, the Parish Council will offer as much support as possible to any agreed process; for example by providing local information, contact details for local groups, advice on meeting places, access to newsletters and so forth.
- **Openness and Transparency:** Building trust between all and ensuring an agreed outcome depend heavily on having a process that is as open as possible on all sides, though the Parish Council will respect any issues of clear commercial confidentiality.



- **Agreed Community:** A project may have an impact on a limited number of people or on all of the parish. The details of those to be involved will need to be discussed and agreed for any project, as will the potential ways to contact and engage them.
- **Agreed Scope:** There will also need to be agreement about the scope of the engagement, i.e. what is and is not open to change (e.g. layout, quantum of development, design etc.).
- **Proportionality:** The nature and scale of engagement will be balanced in appropriate proportion to the scale and likely impact of any proposals.
- **Final Reporting:** The applicant should submit, with any final application, a thorough report – a full report - describing and summarising the outcomes of the engagement, demonstrating how the proposals have (or have not) responded to results. If they have not, a short note should be included to explain this. If the process has been followed fully, the Parish Council will endorse this report; if not they may submit their own evaluation of it**.

Initial contact should be made at the very outset with the Parish Council via The Clerk.

The Parish Council commits to doing all possible to arrange an initial meeting as soon as possible following this contact.

** There is considerable benefit for applicants in also sharing any process with Stroud District Council, as planning authority, and securing their agreement to it.*

*** As per the opening proviso, endorsement of an engagement process and results does not necessarily mean support for the resulting proposals.*

¹ <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/planning-and-building-control/statement-of-community-involvement>

² <https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/pas-topics/planning-applications/10-commitments-effective-pre-application-engagement>

³ For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.