

**Commentary on the motion from Councillor R Evans by the Council's Development Manager**

The origin of this statement, and who it was compiled by, is not clear.

In terms of the motion encouraging early communication with Parish Councils, this is already part of our practice in Shropshire - the following text is taken from our website in relation to pre-application advice:

"It is critical that pre-application discussions for major and/or significant proposals also involve appropriate member and community involvement. You will therefore be offered an opportunity for a co-ordinated meeting with the local member and a representative from the relevant town or parish council. This will not be mandatory for customers, given that some schemes will be subject to confidentially agreements. It will also be for individual members and/or town/parish council representatives to decide if they wish to be involved in such discussions. Officers will also provide customers with advice on best practice on the requirements for community consultations."

Applicants for major schemes are, therefore, already encouraged to speak to Parish and Town Councils before they submit schemes for consideration. The motion before Council is more specific and explicit in that it requires an applicant to attend a meeting with the Parish Council (and subsequently to pay for an independent assessment of impacts) if the Council so requests. However, it is not clear what would constitute a large planning application. as schemes which are major by definition are not always those that generate the most local interest.

Clearly, there are resource issues for both applicant and Parish Council - major schemes are not defined in the context of the motion to council, so it is difficult to confirm how many schemes this may affect.

Establishing consequences should an applicant *not* wish to hold a meeting would be difficult. It could not be used as a reason, for example, not to validate a planning application or to refuse a scheme that otherwise complies with adopted local/national policy. The tone of the motion could be seen as confrontational, rather than collaborative, and experience suggests that many applicants will take up the offer of pre application discussions in any event and will speak to parish councils in a positive forum, as this helps them to explain their proposals and hear local views and knowledge.

Regarding the question of independent assessments for sustainability, the best way of achieving this is under Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy, which sets out the requirements of all development proposals in relation to Sustainable design.

It would not be possible to require an applicant to pay a Parish or Town Council to fund its own assessments of a development proposal.

The motion may be better expressed if the wording was changed to make it discretionary rather than a requirement to meet with the Parish Council, and to explicitly state that this should be at a pre-application stage, as this then has least impact on the determination process. If the applicant then declines, this will be a consideration for the decision taker on the planning application.