



East Woodhay Parish Council

Planning Committee Terms of Reference

1. Remit

(1.1) The Planning Committee (the Committee) is an East Woodhay Parish Council (EWPC) committee, which reports to the full Parish Council. The remit of the Committee is to review all planning applications and respond on behalf of EWPC to planning consultations and, when considered appropriate, send a representative of EWPC to any relevant planning related meeting of the local planning authority or subsequent appeal.

2. Membership

(2.1) The Councillors of EWPC will make appointments to the Committee each year at EWPC's Annual Meeting (AM). A minimum of five Councillors will be appointed as members of the Committee. As such, the Committee will comprise at least five core members with a quorum of three. If a meeting is likely to be inquorate, the Chair of the Committee shall endeavour to secure the attendance of another member or members of the Council at such meeting to make it quorate. The Committee cannot make decisions if a meeting is inquorate.

(2.2) The Parish Clerk in liaison with the Committee will allocate roles to enable it to self-administer; however, the point of contact for members of the public will be the Parish Clerk. The Chair of the Committee will report to the Council regarding the Committee's activities and any other relevant issues. The Committee may agree on an ad-hoc Vice Chair to facilitate meetings in the absence of the elected Chair.

(2.3) The Committee is authorised to establish working groups, comprising Councillors and external parties, which may meet informally; however, these groups will be advisory only, and any decisions must be taken by the Committee as described herein.

3. Meetings

(3.1) Meetings will usually be held twice monthly and are subject to the same requirements as EWPC meetings for posting agendas and publishing minutes. Meeting dates will be published on the parish noticeboards and EWPC website (www.eastwoodhay-pc.gov.uk).

(3.2) Minutes will be recorded of all Committee meetings. The Committee will approve the minutes at its next meeting and submit them to the Clerk for publication. The minutes will be referenced at the next meeting of EWPC.

(3.3) The Committee shall nominate one of its members, in liaison with the Parish Clerk, to be responsible for preparation of agendas and minutes and for submitting responses to planning applications to the local planning authority.

(3.4) In the case of urgent/time-sensitive situations, the Committee may elect to convene an extraordinary meeting or conduct business by way of email or telephone call. In such circumstances, any decisions will be reported and recorded at the next Committee meeting.

(3.5) The public and press will be admitted to all meetings of the Committee in line with EWPC's Standing Orders. Non-member councillors, members of the public, or the press may be invited to speak by the Chair of the Committee. Speakers will each be allotted four minutes to make representations for or against a planning application. This time may be extended at the discretion of the Chair.

(3.6) The Committee has the right to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public, per s1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. The press and public may be excluded from the meeting while the Committee considers confidential or sensitive issues. If the press and public are likely to be excluded, this will be advised on the agenda. Exclusion from the meeting is a weighty decision and must be subject to a majority vote by the Committee.

4. Delegated Authority

(4.1) The Committee has delegated powers to consider planning applications and to respond to them on behalf of EWPC. The Committee cannot make decisions on behalf of EWPC other than those defined herein. The Committee may seek to utilise the services of planning professionals to provide advice when necessary. However, it is not authorised to spend money on such activities without the approval of EWPC.

(4.2) As described above [Meetings], members of the Committee cannot make decisions outside Committee meetings except in urgent/time-sensitive situations.

5. Voting

(5.1) Only full council members may vote at a Committee meeting. In the case of an equal vote, the Chair of that meeting shall have a casting vote.

6. Declaration of Interests

(6.1) Members of the Committee are required to be aware of personal interests, disclose any personal interests, and withdraw from a Committee meeting where there is a conflict of interest.

7. Scope

(7.1) To consider all planning applications, referring to and studying relevant plans, and valid planning-based comments already made by parish residents. Individual Councillors may seek to visit relevant sites to inform their opinion and consider any comments from parish residents or other interested parties before concluding an opinion. All considerations will be made with reference to the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan, the Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

(7.2) Any site visit must be notified in advance to the Committee, other than a simple familiarisation visit which does not necessitate contact with landowners. E.g., walking or driving past the proposed site of a new building or building alteration.

(7.3) The Committee will:

- Consider whether to canvass opinions for and against applications to assist with the fair determination of applications.
- Form a consensus to respond to each planning application proportionately and professionally on behalf of the Council.
- Ensure that any objections or recommendations are based solely on planning criteria.
- Consider environmental aspects when assessing planning applications.
- Monitor the general environment of the parish and report to the planning authorities any potential planning breaches brought to the attention of the Committee.
- Respond to consultations regarding planning issues or issues that will impact planning; the Committee is authorised to make written representation or elect a member to attend the hearing or oral consultation.
- Review and monitor the Local Plan update, and then monitor its impact on, and of, the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan.

(7.4) When an application is subject to appeal, the Committee is authorised to make written representations and to elect a member to attend the hearing if necessary.

(7.5) Committee members may attend planning training sessions when offered by the planning authority and will endeavour to read and become familiar with all relevant planning documentation.

(7.6) In circumstances where the Committee feels an application is significantly complicated or presents substantial challenges to the community, such as having both widespread support and objections, the Committee may elect, by way of a majority vote, to refer the matter to EWPC. The referral should be accompanied by an informative report and recommendations, which should include a motion to object to or support an application or for EWPC to hold an extraordinary public meeting to which partner agencies may be invited.

(7.7) The Clerk may ask the Committee to consider matters ancillary to planning, for example, alcohol licensing, event and entertainment licensing, or EWPC-initiated Tree Protection Orders. In such cases, the Committee will act in an advisory capacity to the Clerk unless otherwise agreed by EWPC. These requests may arise due to a need from another Committee of EWPC.

8. Management of Funds and Consultants

(8.1) The Committee via the budgeting process, may request funds from the Parish Council to support any consultancy services which may be required. The Committee will be responsible for the selection of such consultancy services, management of them, pricing and justification of the funds required.

(8.2) On allocation of such funds, the Committee have responsibility for full management of them in liaison with the Clerk, with report to the Parish Council on spend and any risk associated with that spend, as well as mitigation of such risk.

9. Review

(9.1) These Terms of Reference were agreed by EWPC at its meeting on meeting on 24th June 2024 for implementation by the Committee; they shall be reviewed annually or sooner in case of a change in legislation affecting the business of the Committee or as and when requested by the Clerk.

East Woodhay Parish Council

Next Review Due: November 2024

24th June 2024 (for January 2024)**

Version: Final v5

** These Terms of Reference (v4) were agreed by EWPC on 29th April 2024 and amended (v5) following audit to include the participation of the Parish Clerk.