

Aust Parish Council

Planning Applications Procedure

Version	Date adopted	Minute ref.	Notes	Review due
1.0	8/9/26	APC2026-09/8.4	First adoption.	Sep 2028

INTRODUCTION

Parish and town councils are consulted on any planning application received by the local planning authority. The knowledge of parish councillors represents local views, provides local information, raises areas of concern, informs debate, and adds value to the process.

The aim of this planning applications procedure is to streamline the way in which Aust Parish Council responds to planning applications and ensure residents are kept informed of planning matters.

RESPONSIBILITIES

South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) are the local planning authority and are responsible for recording and reviewing planning applications, consulting other key stakeholders (known as “statutory consultees”) and for making all decisions on whether to grant planning permission and any conditions which should be attached.

Aust Parish Council (APC) are notified by SGC, via the Clerk, of all planning applications within the parish boundary.

The clerk is responsible for informing councillors of the application and for submitting the council’s response to SGC.

Councillors are responsible for reviewing the application documents, considering local knowledge and input where relevant, and deciding APC’s response.

RECEIPT OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Most planning application consultations have a three-week window for response. This can cause problems given that APC typically meets only once per month, with no meetings in August and December.

The procedure on receipt of a planning application notification therefore depends on when it is received in relation to the council meeting date.

1) Applications received more than three clear days before a meeting, with an expiry date after that meeting

The clerk will inform councillors by email. The application will be listed on the agenda, with a link to the relevant pages on the SGC website.

2) Applications received within three clear days of the next meeting

The clerk will inform councillors by email & WhatsApp. Councillors will pass these on to residents via village email groups where they feel it is appropriate to do so.

The application will then be considered at the council meeting as if it had been specifically listed on the agenda. (The standing agenda item includes provision for consideration of applications received after publication.)

3) Applications with an expiry date before the next council meeting

The clerk will request an extension from the SGC planning officer. If granted, the application will be dealt with as in part 1) above.

If no extension is granted, the clerk will inform councillors of the application by email and will highlight that the consultation period ends before the next council meeting. A deadline for response will be set, of at least 3 working days.

If all comments received by the deadline recommend either:

- a simple “no objection” type response, with no or only minor comments; or
- where an application is a repeat or amendment of a previous application, a response which is substantially similar to APC’s previous response;

the clerk shall draw up such a response and submit to SGC under delegated powers, as provided for in the council’s Scheme of Delegation.

If any councillor deems that the application requires something other than a response as detailed above, they must ask the clerk to call a meeting of the relevant village Planning Committee. The Planning Committee then has delegated power to respond on behalf of the full council, as provided for in the Scheme of Delegation.

PLANNING RESPONSES

Material planning concerns

The parish council can only legitimately make comment on material planning concerns, which are issues that the Local Planning Authority is legally required to consider when deciding a planning application. They relate to the use and development of land, not personal preferences or private interests.

Examples of material planning concerns which the parish council may consider include:

- Local and national planning policy, e.g. green belt designation
- Highway safety and traffic impacts, e.g. parking, traffic volume, location of entrances, pedestrian and cyclist safety

- Residential amenity, e.g. loss of light, overshadowing, overlooking, noise, disturbance, or odour affecting nearby homes
- Design, scale, and materials, e.g. whether the proposal fits the character of the area, uses appropriate materials, or appears overbearing
- Impact on heritage assets, e.g. effects on listed buildings or historic village features.
- Public rights of way
- Ecology and biodiversity

Non-material issues, which cannot be taken into account, include:

- impacts on property values
- loss of a private view
- personal opinions
- suspicions that the property may not be used as stated in the planning application

Response types

Planning responses are categorised as *Support*, *Object* or *No Objection*.

The parish council will not normally express *Support* for an application unless it has some wider community-level benefits or positive impacts which extend beyond the boundaries of the property in question.

A *No Objection* response is not an expression of support, but merely states that the parish council can see no legitimate reason why the planning permission should not be granted, subject to appropriate conditions or amendments.

Councillor impartiality

Councillors must remember that they represent all residents of the parish when considering planning applications. Their role is to submit a fair, evidence-based planning response focused on material planning considerations, not to mediate personal disagreements between neighbours. Once the council has submitted its formal planning comments, any further dispute between residents — or between residents and South Gloucestershire Council — should be directed to the SGC ward councillors, who are the appropriate elected representatives for such matters.

REPORTING

All planning responses made to SGC will be summarised in the minutes of the relevant (or next, for delegated responses) council meeting. APC's full responses can be viewed on the application's page of the SGC planning website.

The eventual SGC planning decision will also be reported in council minutes once received.

KEEPING RESIDENTS INFORMED

APC wishes to operate in a transparent manner, but does not have capacity to report every planning application directly to residents.

Residents can find details of planning applications up for consideration via council agendas, which are published on the website (www.austparishcouncil.gov.uk) and on the village noticeboards.

Any short notice applications will also be circulated to the relevant village email and/or WhatsApp group(s). Individual councillors may also choose to circulate details of planning applications which will be listed on the next council agenda, but there is no requirement for this to happen and APC will take no responsibility for residents not being aware of planning matters.

South Glos. Council notifications

SGC no longer send notice of planning applications to neighbouring properties. They consider that the option to sign up for notifications of planning applications in your local area is sufficient.

Residents are encouraged to sign up for these notifications directly from SGC. Instructions for doing so can be found at the following web link: https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/static/88d738034f0da19c1c6bb3ce2fb34c98/How_to_set_up_and_manage_a_Public_Access_account.pdf. You can request notification of planning applications within set parameters, for example all within Aust parish area or with a particular keyword.

Note: Applications are listed with their official postal address; it should be noted that many properties in Elberton do not have the word “Elberton” in their official address but are listed as “Olveston”, so use of Elberton as a keyword is not recommended.

Procedure review

This procedure will be reviewed at least once every two years.

The clerk is responsible for bringing forward the review should any change in legislation or best practice recommendations require such action.