

## **Procedure for considering a major planning application during March to May 2021**

### **1 Introduction**

Local Elections are to take place on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and during the time between 11<sup>th</sup> March and the election the Parish Council faces restrictions on being able to consider certain items and this can include major planning applications. The purpose of this report is to set out what the Council would do if an application were to be submitted during this period and the arrangements it would make for the consideration of a planning application if allowed to do so.

### **2 Possible major applications**

The Parish Council and the local community have been consulted by Eden Renewables on proposals for a Solar Farm at Forest Gate. The pre application consultation took place in November 2020 and the company advised the Parish Council in late December that in the light of feedback from the consultation they would be continuing to work on various studies and the site redesign which they expect to take up to a couple of months and will submit the application after that is complete.

The Solar Farm proposal does not become official Council business until such time as a planning application is submitted and the Parish Council is consulted on it. The proposal has attracted considerable local interest with views both for and against the proposal being voiced in the community. Until such time as an application is submitted the Council has invited residents to send their comments and views to the Parish Council for circulation to Councillors.

### **3 Consideration of a major planning application during the period 11<sup>th</sup> March to 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

In the first instance if the Council is to receive a consultation on a major planning application for which the consultation period lies within the effected dates the Council authorises the Clerk to request advice from the Wiltshire Council Monitoring Officer as to whether the Council can consider the application.

The Clerk will submit the following detail of the meeting that the Council considers will be needed to give the matter proper consideration and afford the community sufficient input to that process.

### **4 Proposed handling of a major planning application**

- It is proposed that the Chairman would call an Extraordinary Meeting to consider any major application. This is to allow consideration of only one item at the meeting thereby ensuring that there is sufficient time for debate and decision.
- The meeting will be set for a weekday evening.
- In light of the current and ongoing Covid-19 restrictions this meeting will be held virtually on Zoom. The Council will consider the limitations of its Zoom licence in light of the likely number of members of the public who may wish to attend, the same way as it would the capacity for a hall for a face-to-face meeting.
- The meeting will have a period of extended public speaking available; this will be held prior to the official start of the meeting and will last not less than 45 minutes. Members of the public will be asked to speak for no longer than 3 minutes each.
- Councillors will be able to ask questions of those speaking but will not make any statements.
- The Council's usual Public Speaking item held at the beginning of the meeting will be used to afford the applicant and a representative of those in support and those against the application to speak. The representative to be chosen by the community. If no agreement can be made on representatives then the Council will allow only the applicant
- The meeting will then consider the application with no further comment from the public allowed.

**Recommendation:**

**That the Council approve the process as set out in this report as the way in which it will consider any major planning applications during the period 11<sup>th</sup> March to 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**