

# Protocols for Councillors in Administering Planning Applications

Version: 2.2

Date updated: 17 October 2017

Responsible Department: City Design and Construction

## 1. Purpose

- To reinforce Council's role as a responsible authority administering the Casey Planning Scheme and adopted planning policies and strategies.
- To provide Councillors with instruction on their important role in the planning application process.
- To reinforce consistent and transparent processes for parties to a planning application
- To ensure that decisions are not compromised by pre-mature or ill-informed advice provided to applicants or objectors which may not accord with the planning controls.
- To create greater certainty for Council in its role as a responsible authority.

## 2. Definitions

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|------------------------|---|
| <b>Council</b>         | means Casey City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 1989 |
| <b>Councillors</b>     | means the individuals holding the office of a member of Casey City Council  |
| <b>Council officer</b> | means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.                        |

## 3. Policy

Councillors should:

*Requests for advice and information from parties*

- refer parties seeking information or advice to the Customer Service office. Council provides a *planner on roster service* which manage phone and counter visit enquiries during business hours at the Civic Centre. A wealth of information is also provided on Council's website.
- not purport to give town planning advice.
- not place themselves in a compromised position by appearing to be an advocate for or against the proposal.

*Council policy documents change from time to time and it is recommended that you consult the electronic reference copy at [www.casey.vic.gov.au/policiesstrategies](http://www.casey.vic.gov.au/policiesstrategies) to ensure that you have the current version. Alternatively you may contact Customer Service on 9705 5200.*

- guard from future allegations of pre-judging a matter by retaining an open mind (being open to be persuaded); avoiding making fixed statements of support or opposition; and maintaining impartiality.
- give the parties (developer or objectors) “comfort” that there are formal processes in place to consider their views.

#### *Requests for meetings*

- Consider whether there is merit in meeting with a party over and above the consideration of the written submissions.
- Refer meeting requests to the Councillor Support Officer for coordination and these will be held in the presence of a senior member of the Statutory Planning & Building Services Department.
- Not compromise themselves by having meetings with parties to an application without Council officers or the other parties being present.
- Avoid expressing a view that demonstrates a bias or pre-conceived view.
- Request by parties to address the Council on planning matters will require a Council resolution for them to be heard at a General Purposes Committee (GPC). The GPC will generally only hear applications of a substantive scale or those which have significant policy implications. An equal opportunity will be afforded to both the applicant and objectors. The GPC has no statutory role in regard to the determination of planning applications

#### *Objector submissions*

- Refer objections or submissions asap onto the Councillor Support Officer or Manager Statutory Planning & Building Services for registration and acknowledgement.
- Advise the objectors that their submission will be considered and they will be advised of Council’s decision and any review rights.

#### *Decision-making on planning applications*

- Review the monthly circulated list of planning applications and contact the Manager Statutory Planning & Building Services for any questions or requests to have the matter determined at a future Planning Committee
- Make town planning decisions with a clear and open mind in accordance with the Casey Planning scheme and setting aside any personal views;
- Contain deliberations and debate to the planning merits of the application under consideration.
- Contact the Councillor Support Officer, Manager or Strategic Director in if they have questions about the Planning Committee agenda.

## **4. Administrative Updates**

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

## **5. Review**

The next review of this document is scheduled for completion by 30 June 2021.