

IBSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

PLANNING STATEMENT

Following recent applications for the construction of new houses and other material changes to the environment of this parish the Parish Council believes it would be helpful to set out its position, for the benefit of future applicants.

PROCESS

1. Applications for any works that require consent under Town Planning or Hedgerows and other environmental legislation are decided by Wycombe District Council (WDC).
2. Ibstone Parish Council (IPC) is one of a number of statutory consultees from whom comments are requested.
3. IPC discusses all applications referred to it by WDC at its regular Ordinary meetings, or by email if time deadlines are too short to allow this, and our Clerk comments within specified deadlines.
4. Any councillor who declares a personal interest in an application (e.g. they are an immediate neighbour) may not take part in deciding upon the PC response to WDC, but they can make personal comments in the same manner as any other parishioner.

CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS

1. WDC only take note of comments from the PC which are based upon planning legislation, and the PC therefore endeavours to be specific and objective in its responses.
2. Because WDC does not yet have a Local Plan and has not identified a 5 year supply of building land within its district, many applicants are relying upon s.11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was revised in July 2018 to argue that there should be a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and that WDC have to show that 'any adverse impacts of a proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits' if they decide to refuse consent. The WDC draft Local Plan is currently expected to be formally adopted in early/mid 2019.
3. Ibstone is located in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The NPPF directs councils to consider this aspect in paras 172 and 173. Para 172 states that 'great weight' should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage in AONB's which are one of three designated areas (the others being National Parks and The Broads) to have the highest status in regard to these issues. It also states that planning consent for major development (the definition of which is a matter for the decision maker) should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances. The PC will take close note of this important guidance and other relevant paragraphs of the NPPF in considering all aspects of each case.

4. The PC believes that it has a duty to protect and maintain the special character of the parish, whilst also accepting that any change which complies with planning legislation should occur, as it acknowledges that change is an important driver of vitality in villages such as ours. However, unlike some, we only have a relatively limited number of old or architecturally interesting properties (although we have more listed buildings than Turville) and the character of the village is predominantly defined by its open configuration and rural environment. This is what we believe we should seek to protect.
5. The housing stock within the parish varies in age and size, and this is reflected in a broad range of value and affordability, notwithstanding that the parish is located in a high value area. The PC wishes to maintain diversity in the interests of attracting a balanced spectrum of residents within the community.
6. The PC wishes to encourage good design and use of materials which are sympathetic to, and in keeping with, rural Buckinghamshire vernacular architecture.
7. The intensification of use of existing junctions with the road, and the formation of new ones will be closely examined in the context of road and pedestrian safety, as we know we have a traffic speeding problem on our narrow roads which have no pavements or street lighting.
8. Clearing of existing woodland or open space will alert the PC to the possibility of new development and will be closely monitored if it is considered a potential threat to the rural character of the village environment.
9. Change generally occurs incrementally, as one consent follows precedent established by earlier consents. We therefore address the wider possible implications of any application as well as its specific details when we comment.

Adopted January 2019