

Adopted: May 2026  
Review date: May 2027

## **Terms of Reference – 2026**

Planning Committee  
Finance & General Purposes Committee

### **PLANNING COMMITTEE:**

To make recommendations on behalf of South Petherton Parish Council on all matters relating to planning within the Civil Parish of South Petherton, including but not exclusively; planning applications, planning appeals, tree preservation orders (TPO's), enforcement notices and on planning policy reviews at local, regional and national levels.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To safeguard, maintain and where possible, enhance the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Civil Parish of South Petherton for both the current and future generations.

### **THE PLANNING COMMITTEE WILL:**

- (a) Provide training to committee members.
- (b) Review the planning documentation and visit the site where necessary.
- (c) Provide parishioners the opportunity to view plans held by the Parish Council
- (d) Hold public meetings where appropriate.
- (e) Encourage public participation at meetings.
- (f) Request where appropriate for the Ward Councillor to 'call in' an application to the Local Authority's Area committee.

### **THE CLERK WILL:**

- (a) Post agendas on all available notice boards
- (b) Circulate the online applications to all Parish Councillors and interested residents with a copy of the top sheet going to all members of the Planning Committee
- (c) Ensure that all responses to the local authority give the Parish Councils detailed reasons for either making no comment, approving or recommending refusal of the application.
- (d) In consultation with the Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman, submit a formal response recommending support or objection, to Somerset Council in the event of a planning application being received within a timescale that does not fall within the Committee cycle.
- (e) Ensure that such planning applications responded by way of delegated powers are subsequently retrospectively approved by the Parish Council or Planning Committee

## **PLANNING PROCESS ADVICE NOTES**

Somerset Council is the planning authority responsible for planning decisions within the Civil Parish of South Petherton and is the only body that can make decisions within the Parish. South Petherton Parish Council is empowered and entitled to make an observation or comment on an application to Somerset Council on behalf of the Parish. Individuals may make comment on an application, directly to Somerset Council and are welcome to comment on applications at Planning Committee meetings in public session.

Guidance on new planning applications can be sought via the Governments Planning Portal website <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/view-and-comment-on-a-planning-application/>. Once Somerset Council has accepted and verified the application it will: -

1. Display the application on the Somerset Council website - where it is freely available for the public to view.
2. Notify any near neighbours of the application.
3. Advise the Parish Council of the application.
4. Advise the Ward Councillor of the Application.
5. Put up a notice at or near the development site.
6. Notify any statutory consultee e.g. Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board.

Within South Petherton the Parish Council has delegated powers relating to Planning to a specific committee: The South Petherton Parish Council Planning Committee. This committee meets once a month immediately prior to the holding of a Parish Council Meeting which is the first Monday of the month. If found necessary additional meetings will be held as and when required. Members of the public are free to attend any of these meetings and make their views known to the members of the Planning Committee. The Committee will consider each application on its merits and in line with current Somerset Council's Planning Policy, Somerset Council's own local planning policy and regional and national planning policies where relevant.

Following consideration of each individual matter together with any comments from the public the Committee will make its recommendations to Somerset Council. Members of the public are able to make their views known to Somerset Council directly by adding comment on the planning web site or in writing.

The Parish Council may take the opportunity to request that the Ward Councillor 'Calls In' an application should the Committee feel that the application is contentious, outside current policy or relates to a matter of import to the general community.

When an application has been 'called in' the planning decision will no longer be made by the delegated planning officer at Somerset Council but will be referred to an area committee of Local Ward Councillors for a decision. In certain circumstances the area committee may itself refer the matter to the full Planning and Regulatory Committee at Somerset Council.

Once a Planning Application is approved that is the end of the matter. Should an application be refused the applicant has the right to take their case to appeal. Further information on this can be found on both The Planning Portal website <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/view-and-comment-on-a-planning-application/>

## **KEY PLANNING POLICY PRINCIPLES**

The Planning Committee will ensure all decisions are based on sustainable development principles including:

- a) Social inclusion recognising the needs of everyone.
- b) Effective protection and enhancement of the environment.

- c) Where appropriate through the provision of good quality affordable housing the vitality of the village can be perpetuated.
- d) Support growth of local employment.
- e) Preserving and enhancing the character of the village
- f) Development should be well designed and not impose burdens on the residents or create problems for the future.
- g) Ensuring planning decisions conform to the Local Plan, unless there are overriding material considerations.
- h) Ensure that any development or change in use does not have a detrimental impact on infrastructure on the village or its surroundings.

## **PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS**

### 1 Economic Development

Benefit to area – Look favourably on any proposed development within its policy parameters which would offer marked public benefit and/or improvements in traffic and road safety or increased local employment

### 2 Community Services & Facilities

Encourage mixed and multi purpose uses that maintain community vitality and quality of life (e.g. children's play area / multi purpose village hall)

### 3 Housing - a place to live

All applications must be considered against the need for the village to be a community to live in.

- a. Affordable housing – Consider sympathetically the merits of any suitable scheme put forward for affordable housing if there is proof of a local housing need even if just outside the settlement area.
- b. When dealing with Granny flats and holiday annexes care should be taken not to permit a sizeable unit that could become a semi-detached separate dwelling, in particular if it falls outside the settlement boundary.
- c. Infill within an existing boundary could be supported as long as it is not to the detriment of the neighbour's amenity and does not contribute to creating a dormitory settlement, with high levels of out-commuting. The word infill is to be interpreted as development on vacant unused land amid an existing group or settlement.
- d. Flats, conversions and Houses of Multiple Occupation. Conversion of dwelling will be permitted if it does not have an effect on the character and amenities of the property or adjoining properties. The standard of the accommodation does not create an over intensive use of the site. The converted property will not have an effect on the character of the wider area.
- e. The provision of off street parking is encouraged. Developments that impact on on-street parking and potentially harm the safety of the highway for road users and pedestrians are strongly discouraged.
- f. New developments which have used the 'Designing out Crime' Service run by Avon & Somerset Police will be looked upon favourably.

### 4 Conservation Area & Design / Character of South Somerset

Ensure development respects and where possible enhances local character. Designs should be of good quality using appropriate materials. It is essential that a cohesive impression of the distinctive character of the area be respected and enhanced.

- 4.1 The character, appearance and setting of the Conservation area should be preserved and enhanced.
- 4.2 Cables should be placed underground wherever possible and Tele Communications companies should be required to share masts wherever possible.
- 4.3 Open recreation spaces within the village should be retained
- 4.4 All traditional stone boundary walls should be retained and repaired where necessary and encouragement given to the planting of native hedging where appropriate. Where new development adjoins existing stone walls, it should incorporate matching stone boundary walls.
- 4.5 Existing/original features such as windows, doors, and railings which contribute to the character of the building/area should be retained. Replacement windows and doors should match the original in terms of size, design, colour and materials
- 4.6 The scale, design and materials of any development or new development (including extensions) must be appropriate to the area in which it is located
- 4.7 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings must be protected and preserved; the County Archaeologist is to be kept informed of any proposed plan.

### 5 Settlement Boundary & Countryside around South Petherton

The overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscape, heritage and wildlife, so it may be enjoyed by all.

- 5.1 Reuse of an existing building can be accepted provided it meets the following criteria
  - It is suitable for conversion
  - And/or there is need to preserve a building of historical or architectural importance
  - It makes no significant impact on the countryside, landscapes or wildlife
  - Has no detrimental impact on the surrounding infrastructure.
- 5.2 In order to protect the character of the village residential development should not be permitted outside the settlement boundary as defined in the North Somerset Local Plan, with the exception of affordable housing<sup>2</sup>.
- 5.3 All approaches into and out of the village should be protected.

### 6 Character of Landscape

- 6.1 Revised Planning Policy document permits no development on areas that have been statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities and areas which give the village its unique character.

### 7 Agricultural Land & Farm Diversification

- 7.1 Encourage development that delivers diverse and sustainable farming enterprises.

### 8 Open Spaces

- 8.1 Encourage other country side based enterprises and activities which contribute to rural activity.
- 8.2 Support the preservation of footpaths, bridges, stiles and access points to enable people to enjoy and fully utilize the countryside (e.g. walking, running, and cycling).

### 9 Equine Related Activities

- 9.1 To recognise horse riding & other equestrian activity are popular forms of recreation in South Petherton and can provide a useful form of farm diversification.

9.2 Development should be closely monitored to ensure against the proliferation of riding stables in the countryside which may adversely affect an area by nature of their design or location. Account should be taken of their locality to designated bridleways and BOATs. Support will be given to equine enterprises that maintain environmental quality.

## 10 Woodland

10.1 Sustainable management of existing woodland is to be encouraged.

## 11 Transport

Development will only be supported if it would not prejudice highway safety or emergency vehicle access.

11.1 Development giving rise to a significant number of travel movements will only be supported if it is not likely to lead to an unacceptable degree of traffic congestion or to generate traffic that cannot be accommodated without seriously affecting the character of the village and its surrounding area.

## **FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

To make recommendations on behalf of South Petherton Parish Council on all matters relating to its Financial and Economic policies (other than those determined by the Business Committee) as well as overseeing all matters relating to the employment of Staff

### **OBJECTIVE**

To safeguard maintain and where possible enhance the financial and economic well-being of the Parish of South Petherton for both the current and future generations. In addition to ensure good staff relationships are maintained.

### **THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE WILL:-**

in respect to its financial responsibilities :

- (a) provide training to committee members.
- (b) advise the Council as to its financial and economic policies and deal with the allocation and control of financial resources.
- (c) consider all Committee annual budgets concurrent funding and precept requirements and to prepare the annual budget for the Parish Council's approval in the month of January.
- (d) regularly monitor reports of income and expenditure against the approved budget.
- (e) monitor the Council's cash position through bank reconciliations
- (f) annually review fees and charges and make any recommendations to Council as part of the budget setting process
- (g) review regularly – at least every three years - the Council's Banking Investment and Insurance arrangements
- (h) undertake regular reviews - at least every four years – of the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders
- (i) recommend to Council the Annual Return and as part of the process to:
  - consider the annual accounts
  - ensure that the asset register is up to date
  - consider any risk management issues
- (j) consider applications for grants and make recommendations to Council

(k) review annually its terms of reference

**THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE WILL:-**

in respect to its personnel responsibilities:

(a) maintain an overall view of manpower requirements and the allocation of manpower resources

(b) oversee personnel policy and staff management issues including annual review of staff salaries

(c) responsible for health and safety policy

(d) oversee the appointment of staff

(e) deal with personnel matters generally and in particular

- recruitment and appointment procedures
- training
- staff welfare
- clerk's appraisals
- terms and conditions of service
- discipline (all disciplinary action will referred to the council)
- arrangements to hear any discipline or grievance appeals
- matters arising under legislation relating to contracts of employment and industrial relations
- staff handbook
- continuous professional development of staff
- training of councillors
- review regularly job descriptions

(f) review annually its terms of reference

**THE CLERK WILL:**

- Post agendas on all available notice boards
  - Prepare and produce for Council three monthly accounts commencing in April of each year
  - Prepare monthly bank reconciliations.
  - Prepare the Annual Return for Council approval
  - Liaise with both the Internal & External Auditor
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