

Stretton Grandison Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
An advisory committee of Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council
Meeting on 3rd December 2018

DEALING WITH CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – REAL AND PERCEIVED

It is evident from the site submissions that some matters are highly sensitive with obvious differences of view emerging. Some matters will be highly contentious. Decisions by the SGNPSG (when and if adopted by the Stretton Grandison Group community) involve significant planning issues, pecuniary implications and community benefits and dis-benefits.

The main function of the SGNPSG Group is to be the channel for assessing and expressing Community views on the content of the Neighbourhood Plan. Members of the Group must clearly contribute their own common sense and expertise but above all else it is the role of the Group to retain confidence in the integrity and transparency of the process - after all this will be tested at the end by the referendum.

To retain the confidence of the community (and would-be developers), we must err on the side of caution when assessing whether we, as individual members, have any conflicts of interest. This is as much a matter of perception as fact.

As we are entering a a couple of months with critical issues under discussion, it is proposed that the Group adopts some firm and clear guidelines on Conflicts of Interest for this phase of its work, namely:

- 1. Members will act at all times in a manner which preserves the integrity and transparency of the process of compiling the NP and fulfil their primary role of being a conduit to assess and express the views of the Community they serve.**
- 2. Members must declare any pecuniary interest, may take part in discussion on, but not vote (main group, sub-groups or informal meetings) when the relevant matter is considered.**
- 3. Members should exclude themselves from involvement in any matter where their personal views are so firmly held that they cannot reasonably appraise the relative merits of proposals.**
- 4. Membership of clubs, societies, or other organisations (including voluntary posts) shall preclude a Member from any decisions relevant to that organisation (e.g allotment holders shall not participate in matters relevant to that land; school governors shall not participate in any NP matter directly affecting the school).**
- 5. Any member shall exclude themselves from specific decisions on design / development criteria or conservation of village character and views which directly affect his / her own property because of proximity to the matter being considered.**
- 6. Members must recognise that many matters inter-relate and any one policy might impact upon other policies and affect the overall balance or content of the NP; thus in considering the plan as a whole or any individual policy, members should take into account both the spirit as well as content of items 1 to 5 above when deciding when a declaration of Conflict of Interest is necessary.**

The Group will need to review how it operates after completion of this phase of work by the sub-groups and in the light of experience review the guidance.

It is proposed that the SGNPSG considers and if appropriate adopts the above as firm guidance on Conflicts of Interest for the next three months of work by the main group and by the sub-groups.

03/12/18