

Pre-Application Advice on Planning Proposals –

Guidance for Prospective Applicants

Introduction

It is the Council's policy to provide pre-application planning advice, which we believe is beneficial to both customers and the Council in enabling planning applications to be submitted with a good chance of approval within target dates set by the Government. However, the cost of providing this service is not covered by fees for planning applications and is otherwise met by Council Tax payers. The Council has therefore taken the decision to recover these costs by introducing fees for pre-application advice, with effect from April 2009.

Prospective applicants for planning permission should consider carefully what advice to seek at pre-application stage as a subsequent application may be refused if relevant matters have not been addressed in the application.

The scale of fees is based on the scale of proposals and the level of response required by the proposer. Officers' ability to respond to requests for pre-application advice will depend to some extent on the level of information provided by the developer. This varies between submitting a site plan with a request for in-principle advice as to whether development of a particular kind would be acceptable to schemes which have been worked up to a reasonable level of detail.

Therefore, the Council's response could comprise:

- a) an indication of whether the proposal is likely to be acceptable in policy terms;
- b) flagging up any amenity or design constraints;
- c) identifying other possible constraints, e.g. environmental, flood plain, highways;
- d) identifying what consultations would need to take place;
- e) identifying matters to be covered by section 106 planning obligations;
- f) validation requirements (by reference to Validation Checklist).

Within 10 working days of a request for a meeting, a mutually agreeable date will be arranged. Following a meeting, a written response will be provided within 10 working days unless otherwise agreed by the pre-applicant.

Charges

The scale of charges for pre-application advice is set out in the table at the back of this leaflet.

Completing the Form

To help us provide an effective pre-application service, the attached questionnaire should be completed and returned, together with the requisite fee. If you are in any doubt as to the amount of fee required, submit the questionnaire without the fee and ask the administration officer to confirm the amount, which you should then pay. Your request for advice will not be progressed until the correct fee has been paid.

The completed questionnaire should be returned with any information or plans you wish to submit at the outset for consideration. Alternatively, you may address each question in a letter.

“Without Prejudice” Advice

Whilst the Council’s officers will endeavour to ensure that any pre-application advice is robust, please note that any advice given is on a “without prejudice” basis and cannot pre-empt consideration of a formal application. Also, the Council may change its views on the merits of a proposal if there is a change in circumstances after pre-application advice has been given, such as a change in Government policy, case law or a previously unidentified matter comes to light as the result of a consultation reply.

Validation Checklist

Legislation has been introduced concerning certain basic documents and information which must accompany an application for planning permission before it can be validated and thereafter processed. The Council has accordingly published a “Validation Checklist”, available as a hard copy or on the Council’s website, which indicates the information required for an application to be validated. You are strongly advised to refer to the list so that you can make yourself aware of other information requirements which are necessary for the Council to be able to deal with various aspects of your application. The Council are required to make decisions on validated applications within timescales set by Government and you risk refusal if all the information which the Council requires has not been submitted at the outset. In responding to requests for pre-application advice, the Council will draw attention to items from the list which will be needed for full consideration and determination of the application.

4.

Type of formal application proposed, e.g. Full, Outline, Listed Building, approval of reserved matters, details required by a planning condition, etc.

5.

Details and dates of any previous applications or pre-application discussions.

6.

List of documents and plans submitted with this request. You should, if possible, include a statement justifying your proposals with reference to national and local planning policy and guidance, site layout, elevations, details of existing landscape features including trees, etc.

7.

Details of any consultation you have carried out or propose to carry out with statutory and non-statutory consultees at pre-application stage:

Scale of Charges

Meetings

Following the receipt of the required documentation, within 10 working days a meeting will be arranged.

The fee for a meeting also includes written confirmation of the advice given at the meeting. This written confirmation will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting.

	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Commercial</u>	<u>Fee inc VAT @ 20%</u>
Strategic Proposal	50 dwellings or more	10,000 sq.m floor space	£360.00
Major Proposal	10 to 50 dwellings	1,000 to 10,000 sq.m floor space	£300.00
Minor Proposal	1 to 9 dwellings	Under 1,000 sq.m floor space	£120.00

Written Advice

Where a meeting is not required, the following charges will apply to written advice.

The definitions of strategic, major and minor are as set out above.

Fee inc VAT @ 20%

Strategic Proposal	£240.00
Major Proposal	£180.00
Minor Proposal	£90.00

Other Charges

Other requests for information be charged at £50 per hour plus vat at the current rate plus copying charges as set out in the scale of charges

Enquires relating to whether a proposal requires Building Regulation approval be charged a fixed fee of £50 plus vat at the current rate.