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# Pre-Application Planning Advice

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## Pre-application planning advice

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“The Development management team  
**encourages and welcomes** the opportunity  
to provide advice before an application is made”

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### 1.0 Introduction

**1.1** In addition to determining applications for planning permission and related applications / notifications the Development Management team is able to provide you with advice and information on a variety of topics.

**1.2** In order for us to be able to sustain and improve our current levels of service, a range of charges for providing advice/information applies, in addition to the fees payable for the submission of applications. This ensures that the cost of providing this discretionary service is recovered directly from the developer / landowner, and does not fall as a general cost to the council tax payer. Please see section 6 below for a full breakdown of the fees.

**1.3** This guidance note deals with the arrangements for handling pre-application advice. Please see other planning related guidance on the council's [web-site](#) including details of other planning related charges.

### 2.0 Why seek advice?

**2.1** The Development Management team encourages and welcomes the opportunity to provide advice before an application is made. There are considerable benefits in seeking

advice before making an application:

- It gives you an opportunity to understand how our policies will be applied to your development.
- It can identify at an early stage where there is a need for specialist input, for example about listed buildings, trees, landscape, noise, transport, contaminated land, ecology or archaeology.
- It will assist you in preparing proposals for formal submission which, providing you have taken our advice fully into account, will be handled more quickly.
- It may lead to a reduction in time spent by your professional advisors in working up proposals.
- It may indicate that a proposal is completely unacceptable, saving you the cost of pursuing a formal application.
- It can ensure an application is complete and comprehensive and to a satisfactory standard, avoiding rejection at registration stage or early refusal of permission because of inadequate or insufficient information.

### 3.0 Planning advice service

**3.1** If your enquiry is very straightforward, the council provides a [planning advice](#) service.

**3.2** The service is available on Thursday each week, 10am - 3pm. Pre-booking required

**3.3** A phone service is provided to callers without an appointment. However, if you wish to meet the advice planner in person at the Council Offices, a prior appointment will be required. To speak to the advice planner or to arrange an appointment please [email us](#) or phone 01684 272151.

### 4.0 Frequently asked questions

**4.1** Many frequently asked questions can be answered through our website. The Planning Portal is a great resource and we also recommend you visit: [www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission)

### 5.0 Certificate of Lawfulness

**5.1** If you want formal confirmation whether or not planning permission is required for a development, you will need to submit an application for a [lawful development certificate](#).



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### 6.0 What advice will be provided?

**6.1** In providing a formalised scheme for providing pre-application advice the service will provide the following:

- Relevant planning history of a site.
- Identification of planning constraints.
- Identification of relevant planning policies.
- Information regarding potential planning obligations and relevant contacts.
- Relevant validation checklists to identify the information required for a particular type of application.
- Informal guidance on the suggested content of an application.
- Informal and without prejudice written summary of views by the planning officer.

### 7.0 What are the fees?

**7.1** Free advice will continue to be provided for advice relating to:

- Minor development relating to a small business (such as small changes to the external appearance of a building e.g. insertion of a roller shutter door).

- Urgent structural repairs to heritage assets.
- Development proposed by parish councils, neighbourhood plan groups and other community groups.
- Development proposals by affordable housing providers in respect of development of affordable housing schemes.
- Development proposals by not-for-profit organisations, sports and community groups, and charities.
- Development proposals by other local authorities/public sector organisations where the proposal relates to their statutory/operational functions.
- Advice relating to development required solely for the benefit of a disabled person (a doctor's note is required).

**7.2** Informal advice through the duty planner service (see section 3) will be provided free of charge but, for the remainder, a simple charging system is in operation. The schedule of charges applicable for each type of development can be found in appendix A.

### 8.0 What you will need to do

**8.1** For all enquiries\* you will need to [email](#) or write to us and provide the following as a minimum: (An online pre-application request form is available on our website)

- Description of the nature and scale of development proposed and the uses to which land and buildings are to be put.
- Full site address and location plan (1:1250 scale) with the site outlined in red.
- Site history i.e. occupancy of the site.
- Photographs of the site.
- Sketch drawings providing details of the proposal. Floor plans for each floor of the proposed building together with at least sketch elevations that are sufficient to indicate the initial architectural approach and the materials proposed. Drawings should also show any adjacent buildings to identify the context of the scheme and;
- The appropriate fee. (Please note that payment can be made via our [website](#) - see section 9.1)



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**8.2** Development proposals may also need to be accompanied by an initial design and access statement, ecological, landscape, contamination, flood and transport assessments depending upon the location, nature and complexity of the development.

This information will normally be required for all major development proposals.

\*Except enquiries specifically requesting policy advice only for major developments as set out in the table at 7.2 above.

### 9.0 What we will do

**9.1** On receipt of your initial enquiry we will check that the appropriate fee has been paid and whether all the necessary information has been submitted. If it has not, we will write to you confirming what further information we require to progress your request.

**9.2** If the fee has been paid and all the relevant information submitted, then your enquiry will be allocated to a member of the Development Management team who will be the case officer for your enquiry.

**9.3** An acknowledgement will be sent within three working days of a valid enquiry being received. The acknowledgement will act as a

receipt for any fee paid, confirm the details of the case officer handling it and the date you may expect to receive a written reply to a minor enquiry (normally 20 working days from receipt).

**9.4** For enquiries where a meeting is arranged, the case officer will reply within 15 days of the date of the meeting. For more complex enquiries an alternative date may need to be agreed depending on the complexity of the case.

**9.5** This written reply setting out our advice will comprise the service for the standard charge. Further enquiries will be charged another fee (see table of fees above).

**9.6** If, on researching the enquiry, we do not have enough information to answer your enquiry then we will write to you by letter or email, setting out what information we need.

**9.7** The Development Manager and the area team leaders have the right to decline a request for pre-application advice where it is not considered either appropriate or necessary or where insufficient information has been provided.

### 10.0 Status of officer advice

**10.1** Any advice given by council officers on pre-application enquiries is given without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application.

**10.2** The final decision on any application that you may then make can only be taken after the council has consulted local people, statutory consultees and any other interested parties. The final decision on an application will be made by the council's Planning Committee or by the Development Manager under delegated powers in accordance with the council's approved Scheme of Delegation, and will be based on all of the information available at that time.

**10.3** Any pre-application advice that has been provided will be carefully considered in reaching a decision or recommendation on an application; subject to the proviso that circumstances and information may change or come to light that could alter that position.

**10.4** It should be noted that the weight given to pre application advice may decline over time, subject to changing material circumstances.

## Pre-application planning advice

Except where stated each pre-application request will include provision of one meeting.	Large scale major residential development (200+ dwellings) <b>£4,980.36 (incl VAT) and £1,660.16 (incl VAT) each additional meeting.</b>
Replies to written requests for information or documents received from solicitors, developers or professional agents <b>£83.03 (incl VAT)</b>	All major development proposals (>10 dwellings or >1000 square metres floorspace) <b>£849.62 (incl VAT) meeting to discuss policy principles only.</b>
Householder development <b>£83.03 (incl VAT) or £166.06 (incl VAT) with meeting/site visit.</b>	Other minor development* (including changes of use) <b>Written advice £249.02 (incl VAT) Meeting with officers £498.10 (incl VAT)</b>
Householder / minor development affecting heritage assets (e.g. Listed Buildings / Conservation areas) <b>£166.06 (incl VAT) or £249.02 (incl VAT) with meeting/site visit.</b>	Other small scale major development ** <b>Written advice £1,660.16 (incl VAT) and £849.62 (incl VAT) each additional meeting.</b>
1-2 dwellings <b>£415.07 (incl VAT) or £497.97 (incl VAT) with meeting/site visit.</b>	Other large scale major development*** <b>Written advice £3,320.33 (incl VAT) and £849.62 (incl VAT) each additional meeting.</b>
Minor residential development (3-9 dwellings) <b>£849.62 (incl VAT) and £207.44 (incl VAT) each additional meeting</b>	Site visit with tree officer Proposed works to protected trees - <b>no fee payable.</b>
Small scale major residential development (10-49 dwellings) <b>£1,660.16 (incl VAT) and £849.62 (incl VAT) each additional meeting</b>	Site visit with tree officer Householder development <b>£49.76 (max 1 hour) (incl VAT)</b>
Medium scale major residential development (50-199 dwellings) <b>£3,320.33 (incl VAT) and £1,245.09 (incl VAT) each additional meeting.</b>	Site visit with tree officer All other development <b>£166.06 (max 2 hours) (incl VAT)</b>

VAT is payable at the current rate of 20%

\*Minor development = all other developments, including change of use, floorspace of up to 999 square metres or site area of up to 0.99 hectares. Gypsy and Traveller Pitches - 1-9 pitches.

\*\*Small scale major development = all other developments, including change of use: 1000-9,999 square metres or more of floorspace, or where the site area is between 0.5 and 2.0 hectares. Gypsy and Traveller Pitches - 10-199 pitches.

\*\*\*Large scale major development = all other developments, including change of use: 10,000 square metres or more of floorspace, or where the site area is 4.0 hectares or more. Gypsy and Traveller Pitches - 200 or more pitches.

- If further meetings, or requests for advice / information are sought then a further fee will be levied at the above rate (other than where specified in the table).
- These fees cover administration costs and officers' time for research, assessment, travelling time in the case of site visits, a meeting as necessary and a written response.
- Any request for pre-application advice / information must be accompanied by the relevant fee. Each project or separate site referred to in an enquiry will be charged at the appropriate rate.