

Proposed pre-application planning advice service specification

Benefits of using our pre-application planning advice service

Providing constructive informal advice to help shape and progress development proposals is an important part of our service. It can help shape schemes positively before too much time and money has been invested. It can also enable us to identify at an early stage, schemes that the Council's Planners do not believe are likely to receive planning permission. In offering a pre-application advice service, we aim to:

- Identify adopted/emerging policies that are relevant to development proposals
- Identify relevant planning considerations
- Identify external consultees, groups and residents with whom you should engage
- Confirm 'local requirement' documents which will be needed in a submission
- Provide an indication of likely financial contributions (if any) which will be sought
- Provide, where possible, an indication of whether officers think the proposal is likely to get a favourable recommendation in the light of current policies
- Where a scheme is not considered acceptable, provide guidance on what needs to be done to address concerns.

Pre-application advice- proposals not subject to a charge

We will provide pre-application planning advice on these proposals free of charge:

- Householder extensions and alterations, including all outbuildings, granny annexes, extensions, roof extensions and alterations, hardstandings, satellite dishes, solar panels and similar energy efficiency proposals at a residential property
- Community uses which are non-profit making
- Works solely about trees
- Works solely about listed buildings
- Adverts directly related to a small business
- Lawful use certificates.

The level of advice the Council's Planners can offer depends on the information you provide. If you only give us basic information it is likely that we will only be able to provide broad comments and guidance. We will aim to get a written response to you within 25 working days of receiving your enquiry.

Providing pre-application advice on all other categories of development will be subject to a charge, based on the type and scale of the proposal.

Pre-application advice- proposals subject to a charge

Pre-application proposals should ideally as a minimum be accompanied by the following:

- A location plan clearly identifying the site

- A planning statement setting out the proposals and the main issues for which you would like views and guidance
- Photograph(s) of the site and its surroundings
- Sketch proposals of elevations/layouts to appropriate scales
- Schedules of existing buildings, uses and floor spaces

All drawings/statements etc you would like us to provide advice upon should be submitted from the outset. If you subsequently submit these to us, we may well decline to consider them without a further fee.

The quality of advice the Council's Planners can provide depends upon the information you provide. If you submit superficial statements and plans, our advice is likely to be broad, with extensive caveats. If you provide thorough plans and statements, we will be able to give more focused advice.

We are happy to provide a response to your pre-application request either at a meeting or in writing. If you would like a meeting, we will not provide you with a written response, but you are welcome to take notes of the meeting and submit them to the Planner dealing with your proposals for comment/agreement- there is no further charge for this.

Each pre-application planning advice request can only relate to one site and only one proposal will be accepted for each site. If you would like us to provide you with advice on more than one layout or proposal for the same site, you must make a separate request and pay a fee for each one.

What do we do after receiving proposals for which a charge has been made?

We will acknowledge receipt of your proposal, letting you know the Planner who will be dealing with it and the date they will aim to respond to you by.

The Planner will assess your proposal in relation to:

- Relevant Government policy and guidance;
- Adopted and where relevant emerging planning policies;
- Any relevant planning history.

We will seek views upon the proposals from other sections within the Council where appropriate. Where you have asked us to provide feedback on your proposals at a meeting, the Planner dealing with your case may well invite internal consultees to attend.

Site visits will be undertaken as part of providing pre-application planning advice whenever it is feasible to do so. We will endeavour to accommodate requests to meet on site where it is possible to do so.

We aim to provide a response to all developments subject to a 'fixed fee' within 25 working days wherever possible.

Those pre-application proposals which are subject to POA (price on application), are likely to involve more complicated proposals with a broad range of issues to be considered. For those cases we will aim to provide an indication at the outset as to the timetable by which we will provide informal advice by.

For those pre-application proposals which are POA, the charges will be based on the likely officer time which will be spent dealing with the proposals. The Council will annually publish details of the hourly rates of officers upon which the charges will be based.

Where you have asked us to respond to your proposals in writing, you are welcome to contact the Planner to clarify any written points raised without further charge.

If you wish to submit further details for comment or wish to meet the Planner to discuss revisions after we have provided comments on your proposal, you will need to pay a further fee.

If you submit a formal planning application which is decided by the Planning Committee, the Committee will be made aware of pre-application advice provided. Similarly, the reports associated with planning applications decided by Planners, will make reference to any pre-application advice provided.

Duty planning officers

We provide a Duty Planning Officer service between 8.45am and 5.15pm, Mondays to Fridays. The Duty Planning Officer will provide guidance on pre-application proposals for developments we do not charge for, but not for proposals subject to a charge.

What we cannot provide

Whilst we aim to provide thorough pre-application advice, it is informal advice from officers which is not legally binding upon the Council when it makes a formal decision.

Even though Planners may indicate that in their view your proposals are acceptable they cannot guarantee that planning permission will be granted. In taking a final decision, the Planning Committee must consider a wide variety of material planning considerations, and must decide how much importance should be given to each of the planning considerations.

If there is a material change in circumstances or new information comes to light after the date the Council provides its informal advice, this may well have implications for informal pre-application planning advice previously provided.