

# CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

## WHY SEEK ADVICE?

We encourage and welcome the opportunity to provide advice before an application is made. Our aims are to enable and promote high quality development as part of the Council's ambitious agenda to transform our District through growth. We have reviewed how we can put more effort into achieving this. Whilst we have to introduce charges, they will enable us to provide a dedicated, responsive and professional service which will reduce uncertainty and be highly cost effective for people preparing a planning application. These fees are in addition to the fees payable for the submission of applications. If you make an application having received advice for which you have paid, the full application submission fee remains applicable.

The advice is intended to help you understand the best way to go about seeking permission. It should not be confused with whether you need planning permission which is handled through a different process.

There are considerable benefits in seeking our advice as

- 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.**

In addition to determining applications for planning permission, advertisement consent and listed building consent, the Development Control Section is able to provide you with advice and information on a variety of topics such as design.

We will still offer free informal telephone advice on simple enquiries (telephone 01304 872486). You may also be able to find the information you need on the planning pages of our website [www.dover.gov.uk/planning](http://www.dover.gov.uk/planning) or on the Planning Portal's website [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk). In addition we offer brief advice from a Duty Officer for District householders seeking to extend their homes

Charges will now be made for pre-application advice, compliance checks and researching planning histories for permitted development restrictions.

## Research of Permitted Development Rights and Planning Histories

This provides confirmation of whether or not permitted development rights have been removed from a dwelling. You may need to know this to confirm if planning permission is required or not.

- Research on Permitted Development Rights: £35
- Research on Planning Histories: £35
- If no research is required there will be no fee but photocopying charges may apply.

*All prices are inclusive of VAT*

- **WHAT MATTERS CAN BE COVERED?**

The matters which could be the subject of pre application advice include:-

- Planning History of the site;
- Statutory designations of the site, such as Conservation areas, listed buildings, protected trees, nature conservation etc.
- Relevant planning policies and other material factors applying to the site/development
- The necessary forms, plans and fee
- Supporting information and documents including Local Validation Requirements
- Advice regarding the procedure, consultation arrangements and estimated time scale for processing the application;
- Any requirements for developer contributions to the infrastructure necessary to support the proposed development, for example affordable housing, open space, accessibility etc.;
- Informal, and without prejudice, comments on the content, preparation and presentation of an application likely to satisfy the Council's planning policies;
- The merits of draft proposals (e.g. appropriateness of design) **and**
- The provision of copies of any relevant documents, subject to the Council's standard copying charges

## **INFORMATION WE WILL NEED FROM YOU**

We will always ask you to write to us with details of your proposal if you want us to comment on a particular building, extension, design etc. If you wish us to meet you on site, it may be preferable to contact us first so the correct fee can be established

For **all enquiries** you will need to send us the following as a minimum:

- Written details of the address and proposal;
- Description of the nature and scale of the development proposed and the uses to which land and buildings are to be put;
- Site location plan with the site clearly marked (to a recognised scale, north point etc);
- Sketch drawings providing details of the proposal (to a recognised scale);
- Photographs of the site and surrounding area, with particular regard to any nearby houses or other development which might be affected by your proposal
- Contact details including phone number and email address;
- Request for a site meeting (if any)
- The appropriate fee - **No detailed work will be undertaken until the full fee has been paid.**

## **Major schemes**

**All of the above information, plus;**

- An initial design and access statement
- Access and parking arrangements;
- This may also need to be accompanied by ecological, landscape, contamination, flood and transport assessments depending upon the location, nature and complexity of the development.

## **WHAT WE WILL DO**

On receipt of your initial enquiry, we will decide whether it requires pre-application advice and what type of advice is most suitable. We will then check that the appropriate fee has been paid. If it has not, we will write to you confirming that we will not progress your enquiry until the appropriate fee has been paid.

Once the fee has been paid, your enquiry will be allocated to an appropriate officer.

An acknowledgement will be sent within 3 working days of a valid enquiry being received and it will include a receipt for the fee and confirmation of the officer handling the request. We will do our best to reply within 20 working days. In particularly complex cases, more time may be needed and we advise you about when you may expect a reply.

The written reply setting out our advice will comprise the service for the standard charge. Further enquiries will be charged another fee.

If 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. If the enquiry relates to a Major proposal then you will be contacted by the officer allocated to your enquiry, who will confirm whether there is sufficient information to provide advice and, if not, will ask for additional information. In either case, the clock will stop until all of the information is received.

Where a meeting is sought, we will arrange a suitable date depending on the complexity of the scheme and the amount of work that will be needed beforehand. This may include any time necessary to obtain initial views of other interested parties such as the Highways Engineer, Environment Agency etc. However, no meetings will take place without prior sight of the requested information.

Attendance of other officers at the meeting, including specialist advisors, will be at our discretion but will not require the payment of additional fees.

Following the meeting, we will confirm the advice in a letter or email. Again, this will usually be within 20 working days unless the proposal is particularly complex, when an alternative timescale will be agreed at the end of the meeting.

Should a further meeting be required, the scope for such a meeting will be established beforehand together with the relevant fee which must be received together with any relevant documents before the subsequent meeting.

Any meeting will normally take place at the Council Offices at Whitfield. The Development Control Manager may exceptionally vary this to allow a request for a meeting on site. If so, the fee will normally be adjusted to reflect time spent.

The Development Control Manager has the right to decline a request for pre-application advice where it is not considered either appropriate or necessary.

## WHAT ARE THE CHARGES?

### Major Developments

- New residential development of 10 or more new dwellings;
- Change of use of buildings or land where the gross floorspace or site area is 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more;
- New non-residential buildings and extensions to non-residential buildings of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more of gross floorspace;
- Mixed use developments where the combined gross floorspace is of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more.
- Other large scale or complex/specialist applications that require significant officer input (to cover cases such as the Langdon Wind Farm which otherwise would fall as a 'minor development' based on these criteria)

### *Fee*

- *£250 or 1% of the appropriate fee under the Application Fees Regulations, whichever is the greater, for written advice only. Additional advice may be required and will be charged at the same rate;*
- *£500 or 1.5% of the appropriate fee under the Application Fees Regulations, whichever is the greater for up to an hour long meeting plus written confirmation, additional meetings may be required and these will be charged at the same rate. The Planning Officer will agree the need for additional meetings and may recommend the involvement of third parties if it is felt necessary (Specialist Advice, Ward Members, Parish Councils etc.);*
- *Where such proposals involve a parallel application relating to a Listed Building, there will be a single charge at the higher rate.*

### Minor Developments

- New residential developments of 1 to 9 dwellings;
- Residential conversions involving change of use to more than one dwelling;
- Change of use of buildings or land where the gross floorspace or site area is less than 1,000m<sup>2</sup>;
- New non-residential buildings and extensions to non-residential buildings from 100m<sup>2</sup> to 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross floorspace;
- Mixed use developments where the combined gross floorspace is less than 1,000m<sup>2</sup>.
- Proposals affecting Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas;
- Advertisements.

### *Fee*

- *£150 for written advice only. Additional advice may be required and will be charged at the same rate;*
- *£250 for up to an hour long meeting plus written confirmation, additional meetings may be required and these will be charged at the same rate. The Planning Officer will agree the need for additional meetings and may recommend the involvement of third parties if it is felt necessary (Specialist Advice, Ward Members, Parish Councils etc.);*
- *Where such proposals involve a parallel application relating to a Listed Building, there will be a single charge at the higher rate.*

## Other Types of Developments

- New buildings and extensions and alterations to non-listed buildings that require permission and are not covered above.
- Works to protected trees

### *Fee*

- *£50 for written advice only. Additional advice may be required and will be charged at the same rate;*
- *£60 for up to an hour long meeting plus written confirmation, additional meetings may be required and these will be charged at the same rate. The Planning Officer will agree the need for additional meetings and may recommend the involvement of third parties if it is felt necessary (Specialist Advice, Ward Members, and Parish Councils etc.);*
- *Where such proposals involve a parallel application relating to a Listed Building, there will be a single charge at the higher rate.*

**Please note that there will be no charge for 15 minutes' advice with our Duty Officer on one occasion at our Offices on such matters to District householders. If you wish us to visit your site, the higher charges will apply.**

### **What the costs cover**

These fees cover administration costs and the time spent in research, assessment, a meeting as necessary, and in making a written response

Any request for written advice must be accompanied by the relevant fee otherwise advice cannot be provided. Each project or separate site referred to in an enquiry will be charged at the appropriate rate. Sites may not be artificially divided in an attempt to attract a different tariff. Multiple requests will attract the appropriate multiple fees. The Development Control Manager has the right to determine the fee. In the event of any disputes, the issue will be referred to the Head of Development and Public Protection whose word will be final. Where the appropriate fee is not paid within 15 working days after a reminder, submitted details will be returned and no response given.

### **PLEASE NOTE**

Our pre-application advice service is offered to both developers and individual applicants including householders. In either case there are some general points which you should take into account before you contact us:

- Try to contact us at the earliest reasonable opportunity in your project;
- Undertake some initial research yourself including looking at our notes on how to submit a valid application;
- Sound out the views of those who may be affected by your proposals;
- Remember the more information you can give us, the more accurate and helpful our response can be – vague proposals can receive only vague advice. The key to the success of this service will be you providing us with adequate information in advance – this is set out in more detail in the documents mentioned above; and
- On complex issues be prepared to seek private professional help – our service is not intended to be an alternative to employing professional consultants.

We will always do our best to give you the best advice we can on the information which is to hand. However, you need to be aware that any advice given by Council Officers for pre-application enquiries does not constitute a formal decision by the Council as Local Planning Authority. Any views or opinions are given in good faith, and to the best of our ability but without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application.

The final decision on any application that you may then make can only be taken after we have consulted local people, statutory consultees and any other interested parties. It will be made by planning officers or by the Planning Committee and be based on all of the information available at that time.

You should therefore be aware that officers cannot guarantee the final formal decision that will be made on your application(s). However, 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.

Please note that the weight given to pre application advice will decline over time.