

Southampton City Council pre-application planning advice guidance



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Introduction

Pre-application discussions are considered vital and are encouraged whenever possible and advice is an important aspect of the planning process which can be of benefit to all parties involved. This should improve the quality of applications being submitted. It should also allow the council to deal with applications promptly and provide applicants with a greater degree of certainty.

The requirements for the Pre-Application Advice Service are:

- to try to overcome any possible reasons for refusing permission
- to improve the quality of applications submitted
- to improve customer care and satisfaction with the service; and
- to recover the costs of advice that would otherwise be borne by the council taxpayer.

Pre-application advice for minor domestic proposals and Permitted development

- Complete an online request, using the Service Request Form, or a letter to request detailed advice in writing (Fee £35).

- Complete an online request, using the Service Request Form and book an appointment with the Duty Planning Officer. A meeting with the Duty Officer will normally be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes (Fee £35, including a brief note of the meeting).

- Free telephone advice is available giving you advice on the basic principles only

The council will contact you regarding the pre-application advice within 5 working days of receipt of the on-line request.

For further details of the response times, please see the flow chart of the process. Note that responses may take longer if consultations are required, but we will inform the applicant that additional time is needed. Applicants may also choose to submit a formal application for a Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development at a cost of £75.00

Pre-application advice for Developers and Agents – Majors/Minors

We can offer pre-application advice in response to a written enquiry and, if requested, following a meeting with officers.

Please complete the Pre-application request form and send by post or email this with the plans and any other information. The council will contact you regarding the pre-application advice within 5 working days of receipt of the request form.

Scale of charges for this service

Minor Applications (1 to 4 new dwellings up to 499 Sq m commercial or 0.49 hectares) £150

Minor Applications (from 5 and up to 9 new dwellings, 500 to 900 Sq m commercial or 0.5 to 0.9 hectares) £300

Major Applications (except large scale i.e. 10 to 99 new dwellings, 901 to 9,999 Sq m commercial or 1 to 2 Ha) £700

A 50% discount will be given where advice is sought at a very early stage and it is only possible to offer broad advice on the principle of the proposal. This would be appropriate where it is not possible to provide scaled plans and elevations. For further information about this, please select the document 'Pre-application fee schedule' below

What we will want from you

- a form and a plan showing the extent of the site, together with details of ownership, and identifying any other land within the ownership or control of the applicant;
- information on the site, including any relevant planning history, the existing use, a schedule of any existing floor space, and any known planning restrictions (having considered the planning information available either on the Council's website or in the Council offices, or elsewhere), for example whether the site lies within a Conservation Area or is a Listed Building; (only required for major or minor development)

- a description of the proposal, including a calculation of any additional floor space if appropriate; and
- any necessary scaled plans, elevations and photographs (the latter of which are often useful as an aid to understanding a proposal).

We may need to request further information if required and in any case we will contact you regarding payment of the fee once we receive all of the information we ask for.

Remember the more information you are able to give us at the pre-application stage, the greater the assistance we can give you. Note that we may only refer to key principal policies and that the current Development Plan and national planning guidance should still be applied accordingly.

If a meeting with officers is requested the meeting will normally be limited to a maximum of one and a half hours for domestic proposals or longer for other categories as set out in the fee schedule. Any additional meetings would need to be paid for separately.

What we may need to consider

The following matters may need to be considered (although this is not an exhaustive list):

- whether the proposed development is likely to be acceptable in policy terms;
- whether there would be an impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers;
- the impact on any Listed Building and Conservation Area;
- the design of the proposal and any sustainability issues arising;
- the servicing, access and parking arrangements; and
- the necessity or otherwise for a Planning Agreement (such as a S106 Agreement) to accompany the application.

Negotiations following the submission of an application for all Customers

The main reason for providing pre-application advice is to try to overcome any potential reasons for refusing permission.

If an application is submitted without any pre-application discussions, and there are difficulties that are unlikely to be capable of resolution within the statutory time period, then negotiations will not normally be entered into. The decision is likely to be a refusal.

Our aim is to ensure that you are in a strong position to address all the apparent planning considerations, including the need for any financial contributions or community improvements that mitigate against the scheme's direct impact, prior to the submission of an application.

Pre-application advice on Large Scale Projects

For very large scale projects, (100 or more houses or 10,000 sq metres, (commercial) or 2 hectares and above) we can offer pre-application advice linked to a Planning Performance Agreement. We would offer comprehensive support to the applicant throughout the process, to agreed standards,

with a phased payment schedule built into the Planning Performance Agreement. The total fee for this service would be in the region of 10% of the anticipated Planning Application fee for the planning application. Please contact the Planning Applications Support Team for further details.

What we be able to give you

A letter or full report from the planning officer will be provided giving:

- a detailed but “without prejudice” informal opinion on the proposal together with the responses from any internal consultations carried out and suggestions on how the application could be improved; and
- the necessity or otherwise for a Planning Agreement to accompany an application, the Heads of Terms, and where possible guidance on the likely amount of any financial contributions required and the relevant projects they would fund.

Following any meeting with officers, a letter/report will be sent, of the meeting within the timescale's set out in the flow chart available below, unless additional time is required in which case the applicant will be advised.

You are also advised to refer to any pre-application discussions (giving the name of officer(s) involved) in a covering letter accompanying your application, preferably enclosing a copy of any relevant pre-application correspondence.

Pre-application advice on Building Regulations

No charge is currently levied for pre-application advice on Building Regulations issues.

In order to give effective coordinated advice on projects it is recommended that you seek input from our building control team. You can request that they attend any pre-application meetings or you can seek their advice at a later stage. Please indicate your preference on the application form.

For further information please refer to Building Control.

"Without Prejudice" Advice (Disclaimer)

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 or case law.

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