

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

21 December 2017

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES

#### REVIEW OF PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE CHARGING REGIME

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To review the new pre-application advice service as adopted in June 2016 and to provide Members with a draft updated pre-application advice charging regime pending a further review in 2018.

#### 2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The pre-application advice service(s) provided by Local Planning Authorities apply to all Welsh Local Planning Authorities as part of the Welsh Government's wider positive planning programme.
- 2.2 The delivery of the County Borough's statutory planning function has links to the Council's Corporate Priorities in particular number 1 - "Supporting a Successful Economy".

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 Bridgend CBC has operated a system of charging for pre-application advice since April 2011. BCBC was one of the first LPAs in Wales to operate a paid pre-application advice service and now most LPAs have a charging system.
- 3.2 The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 (6 July 2015) introduced new pre-application processes that are seen to be key to the delivery of effective frontloading of applications. More specifically, Section 18 of the Act introduced a new statutory requirement for LPAs to provide pre-application services to applicants.
- 3.3 The Regulations set a standard, national fee for the purposes of the statutory pre-application service and this came into force on 16 March 2016 under Parts 1 and 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications and Site Visits) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.
- 3.4 Any additional written advice from or meetings with LPAs regarding a pre-application enquiry did not form part of the statutory (basic level) service. However, the Welsh Government actively encouraged LPAs to provide a more comprehensive pre-application service over and above the statutory minimum and recognised that this may be subject to a discretionary charge under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 3.5 Some Members will recall the Workshop Session on 22 January 2016 which included a summary of the proposed changes and a discussion on the proposed charging regime for the Council's non-statutory service. The workshop explored charging levels, the expected response times, in-house specialist advice and exceptions to charging.

- 3.6 The BCBC Pre-Application Advice Guidance Note was updated to differentiate between the statutory and non-statutory streams of pre-application advice and an informal consultation exercise was undertaken with local planning agents in February 2016.
- 3.7 At the 31 March 2016 DC Committee, Members approved the new guidance note and, following referral to Cabinet on 7 June 2016, the new system for charging for pre-application advice took effect from 13 June 2016.

#### 4. Current Situation

- 4.1 The current pre-application advice service and guidance have been in force since June 2016 and it is an opportune time to review the system and suggest changes to remove any anomalies, to improve the level of service and to insert new categories in order to further clarify the range and variety of charges. **It is not proposed to increase the fees at this point.**

#### 5. Review of the adopted Pre-application Advice Regime (including a comparison with previous years)

- 5.1 The main changes to the 2011 system incorporated into the new regime included:

- a tailored and equitable charging system for different types and scale of development;
- a new charge for householder design advice;
- a new charge to advise if planning permission is required for householder development (i.e. extensions, fences, porches etc.) particularly as this information is available on the Welsh Government's website;
- a bespoke and comprehensive advice service to developers to include meetings and site visits; and,
- an initial free "scoping" meeting with developers on major developments (of up to an hour) to allow the developer to introduce the scheme to the LPA, to set up communication channels between developers and Officers, to identify the information required to be included with any subsequent formal pre-application submission and to assess the required input from other sections within the Council, such as Highways and Public Protection etc.

- 5.2 Developers also have a choice as to which service they want from the LPA:–

- i) the WG statutory scheme, which does not involve a meeting or internal consultations; or
- ii) the non-statutory, bespoke BCBC scheme, which could involve a free scoping meeting, consultation with various internal specialists and further meetings/site visits as necessary.

#### Historic Pre-application Advice Fee Income 2012-2016

Financial Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Income (£)	18775	15030	23061	17240

- 5.3 Preliminary fee income has generally exceeded expectations since the introduction of the paid for service in 2011.
- 5.4 Preliminary enquiry fee income fell in 2015-2016 although it should be noted that the income achieved in 2014-2015 was an exception and was the result of a number of

allocated sites in the Local Development Plan (adopted in September 2013) and major renewable energy schemes coming forward.

- 5.5 Since the adoption of the new charging regime on 13 June 2016, **fee income has increased to £32,039 per year** (based on the period between 13 June 2016 and 13 June, 2017). This represents an increase of **£10,423** when compared with the last full year under the 2011 charging system of £21,616 (between 13 June 2015 and 13 June 2016).
- 5.6 Of the 337 paid for pre-application enquiries received in this period (330 non-statutory pre-app enquiries and 7 WG statutory pre-app enquiries) the fees ranged between £25 and £2500. Members will note that the LPA has not yet levied the maximum fee of £5000 for a major development which is mainly due to the nature and scale of the proposals received.
- 5.7 A small element of the fee income for the last full year (June 2016-June 2017) emanated from the newly introduced fee for providing advice as to whether a scheme required planning permission (i.e. a householder permitted development enquiry). This equated to £3740 without VAT (187 separate queries at £25 per query). Most LPAs (including Swansea, Neath Port Talbot CBC, Monmouthshire and Cardiff) in Wales do not offer this service and simply advise homeowners to apply for a Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed householder development (with an application fee of £95) for a formal decision.
- 5.8 Once Planning receive an emailed enquiry for a householder development (that does not relate to the design of the scheme), the Technical Support Unit advise the enquirer that they can:-
- a) carry out a self-assessment of whether their scheme requires planning permission (by providing them with a link to WG Guidance online);
  - b) submit the details of the scheme with a fee of £25 for a written response from the LPA (to cover the cost of allocating resources to the assessment of the scheme against the permitted development parameters or,
  - c) formally apply for a Certificate of Lawfulness (LDC) for a Proposed Scheme (which has an application fee of £95). n.b. the LPA has noticed an increase in the number of LDCs submitted by conservatory companies.
- 5.9 In the overall period between 13 June 2016 and 1 December 2017, the LPA received a total of 474 initial queries on householder permitted development rights. Through a combination of queries relating to disabled persons properties (free advice), the public deciding to carry out a self- assessment of their proposal (rather than paying the £25 fee for a written response) and the public deciding to either formally apply for planning permission or a Lawful Development Certificate, the overall number of the 474 initial queries that progressed to the paid pre-app advice stage reduced to 286 (£7150).
- 5.10 It is considered that the Officer time saved (188 hours) in not having to process the 188 "lost" queries, together with the fee income gained from the remaining 286 queries (and any application fees from the submission of formal planning applications or Lawful Development Certificates) has improved the efficiency and resilience of the team. It is also considered that providing the professional advice option is valued by the public and is more customer orientated than the rigid system adopted in other LPAs. Depending on resources and work pressures in the coming year, Officers will review whether or not it is reasonable to increase the permitted development enquiry fee (e.g. from £25 to £35) to justify allocating resources to this part of the service.

- 5.11 In terms of good practice and feedback, the free “scoping meeting” service has been well received by the majority of developers, especially on the larger more complicated schemes. This procedure helps the LPA to enable and promote high quality development in the County Borough.
- 5.12 The process allows potential developers an opportunity to outline their scheme and for Officers to identify the main issues. It has been refined over the past year to include detailed research before the meeting, basic guidance at the meeting, a written schedule outlining the scope of the enquiry immediately following the meeting, advice as to which Sections should be involved (the level and nature of staff attending will be dependent on the nature of the development), the quoted cost for supplying the advice and a draft timetable for meetings/responses. It is then up to the applicant whether to engage in our more detailed paid for pre-application service or to use the more limited statutory system.
- 5.13 Whilst it is accepted that not all of the initial queries that benefited from a free scoping meeting resulted in a subsequent formal pre-application advice request or a planning application (for a variety of reasons including the need to engage in the LDP review process or after highlighting insurmountable constraints to development), it is apparent that the advice provided at the scoping stage has been beneficial to potential developers and investors in the County Borough.
- 5.14 The benefits to developers and investors into the County Borough include the timeliness of setting up the meeting and the provision of relevant advice with regard to the new Pre-Application Consultation process on major developments (introduced by the Welsh Government in August 2016). The main advantages for the LPA in offering this service include early engagement with the developer and the avoidance of abortive work during the formal pre-application and application process.
- 5.15 One particular example where the scoping meeting process has produced a successful outcome is the NHS Wales Imaging Academy facility at Pencoed Technology Park. The state of the art facility has been funded by the Welsh Government (£3.4m) and was subject to strict deadlines for securing a planning consent and carrying out the necessary fitting out works. It is expected that the academy will become a hub for innovation and research and it will play a major role in the education and training of the wider imaging workforce in NHS Wales which is a major coup for the County Borough.
- 5.16 Since the procedure has been in place, Officers have gradually refined a system of clearly setting the pre-application advice fees for major developments that is based on the allocation of Officer time and resources to a specific project on a full cost recovery basis. It is considered that this system provides the LPA with a defensible position should a fee be challenged by a developer.
- 5.17 Going forward, the pre-application service could be developed to incorporate discretionary packages such as providing a “Pre-purchase Certificate” to people looking to buy a property in Bridgend CBC (to include a planning history search of the property, a site visit, details of any planning permissions/Listed Building Consents and enforcement history relating to identified breaches of planning control). There could also be scope to provide “Completion Certificates” which state whether or not a permission and/or Listed Building Consent has been carried out in accordance with the approved plans and confirms the status of conditions or approved amendments.

## **6. Potential Changes**

### **• New Categories**

6.1 Having reviewed the implementation of the process since the new charging regime was adopted in June 2016, some specific queries do not fit easily into the categories listed in the guidance note.

6.2 It is proposed to include separate charges for providing permitted development advice for developments other than householder proposals.

6.3 The new categories will cover agricultural and forestry development, telecommunications proposals, changes of use, temporary buildings and uses, commercial/industrial development and domestic and non-domestic micro-generation/renewable energy proposals, as assessed against Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) as follows:

- Agricultural and Forestry development - £50
- Telecommunications Operators proposals - £50
- Changes of Use of land and buildings - £50
- Commercial/Industrial development - £50
- Non-domestic micro-generation/renewable energy schemes - £50
- Domestic micro-generation/renewable energy schemes - £25
- Temporary Uses and Buildings - £25

6.4 It is not proposed to introduce a fee to offer permitted development advice for works carried out by the Local Authority, the Local Highway Authority, Drainage Bodies, Sewerage Undertakers, Statutory Undertakers, Schools, Colleges or Hospitals.

### **• Exemptions**

6.5 With regard to the registered disabled access exemption, it is proposed to include the provision of ground floor disabled facilities rather than just the access to the building, particularly as there is no fee for the corresponding planning application.

6.6 Additionally, it is proposed to exclude Housing Associations from the “Registered Charities” exemption as they are also profit making organisations. However, the LPA can use its discretion whether or not to charge for advice relating to new residential care homes etc.

### **• Specialist Advice**

6.7 In some cases, particularly major schemes, it is necessary to seek advice from the Council’s Land Drainage Section (especially when the new Sustainable Drainage Systems Approving Body is in place) Parks Services Officer and Tourism Section. Therefore, it is proposed to add these to the list of specialist advisors with an hourly fee of £50 (which is consistent with other Sections within the Council). As the LPA itemise the expected input by Officers, it is considered that the flat rate fee for major developments can be removed from the schedule.

### **• Planning History Search**

6.8 At the minute there is a flat rate of £50 per plot. However, it has been noted that it is much more time consuming to carry out searches for planning history pre-dating 1996.

Therefore, it is proposed to charge £40 for a planning history search back to 1996 and £80 per search between 1976 and the present.

- **Copies of Approved Plans**

6.9 Occasionally the LPA are asked to provide copies of approved plans. To cover the time spent sourcing the approved plans, it is proposed to add a charge for this service as follows:

- A4 plans – £1 per sheet
- A3 plans - £2 per sheet
- A2 plans - £4 per sheet
- A1 plans - £10 per sheet
- A0 plans - £20 per sheet

## **7. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

7.1 The wellbeing goals and the duty have been considered in the production of this report. It is considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing goals/objectives as a result of the report.

## **8. Next Steps**

8.1 Officers will review the draft updated pre-application advice guidance note following the DC Committee meeting before referring the item back to Members and Cabinet in 2018. It is expected that an updated guidance note can be adopted in April 2018 and the pre-application advice service will, thereafter, be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **9. Recommendation**

That Members Note the content of this report and the draft updated pre-application advice charging schedule and guidance note.

**Mark Shephard**  
**Corporate Director Communities**

Contact Officer  
Mr. Rhodri Davies  
Development and Building Control Manager  
Telephone Number: 01656 643152, e-mail: rhodri.davies@bridgend.gov.uk

## **Background documents**

Appendix 1:

Draft Updated Pre-Application Advice Guidance Note (as adopted 13 June 2016 with proposed changes highlighted in red)

# Bridgend County Borough Council

## Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr



### BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL - COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE - DEVELOPMENT GROUP

#### CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE - GUIDANCE NOTE

**Updated Version effective from 2 April 2018**

The Council has operated a paid for pre-application advice system since April 2011. We encourage and welcome the opportunity to provide advice before an application is made.

The *Planning (Wales) Act 2015* (6 July 2015) introduced new pre-application processes that will be key to the effective frontloading of applications.

Section 18 of the Act introduced a new statutory requirement for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to provide a pre-application advice service.

The Regulations set a standard, national fee for the purposes of the statutory pre-application service and this came into force on 16 March 2016 under Parts 1 and 2 of the *Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications and Site Visits) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016*. The Regulations require LPAs to provide a **written response** to all valid pre-application enquiries within 21 days, unless an extension of time is agreed between the Authority and applicant.

Any additional written advice from, or meetings/site visits with, LPAs regarding a pre-application enquiry will **not** form part of the statutory (basic level) service.

However, the Welsh Government actively encourages LPAs to provide a more comprehensive pre-application service over and above the statutory minimum and recognise that this may be subject to a discretionary charge under Section 93 of the *Local Government Act 2003*.

Our aim is to enable and promote high quality development. We have reviewed our pre-application advice charging schedule and, whilst we have increased the charges compared to 2011 levels, they will enable us to provide a more responsive and professional service which will reduce

uncertainty and be highly cost effective for people preparing a planning application. A new guidance note was adopted in June 2016 and the pre-application process was reviewed again in December 2017. This is the updated version of the guidance note which came into force on Monday 2 April 2018 following reports to the Development Control Committee and Cabinet.

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 and offer the option of the statutory level of service or a more bespoke, flexible and comprehensive non-statutory level of service.

The main changes to how we have previously applied our pre-application advice service are:

- a tailored and equitable charging system related to the type and scale of development proposed;
- a new charge for householder design advice to cover the time and cost of assessing a domestic extension etc.;
- a bespoke and comprehensive advice service to include the option of undertaking meetings and site visits; and,
- an initial free “scoping” meeting with developers on major developments (of up to an hour) to identify the information required to be included with a pre-app submission and the required input from other departments of the Council and statutory consultees such as the Highway Authority and Public Protection etc.

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, landscaping, noise, flooding, 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.**

You may be able to find the information you need on the planning pages of our website [www.bridgend.gov.uk/planning](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/planning) or on the Planning Portal's website [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk).



Householders seeking to extend their homes can access our website to establish if planning permission is required and can also access our Supplementary Planning Guidance advice on householder development. However, we are introducing a new charge for responding to queries as to whether a proposal is a form of permitted development or not **due to the resource implications of providing this advice.**

## WELSH GOVERNMENT STATUTORY PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE SERVICE

The Welsh Government's Statutory Pre-Application Advice Service specifies that developers must submit **a completed pre-application advice enquiry form** containing information on their proposal to enable a response from the LPA. As a minimum they will be required to provide:

- Name, address and contact details
- Description of the proposal (including an indication of any increase in floorspace and/or number of new units proposed)
- Site Address
- Location Plan
- Fee

The fees that will be levied for the statutory pre-application service are the same across Wales, although they vary depending on the size and scale of the proposed development as follows:

- Householder - £25
- Minor development - £250
- Major development - £600
- Large major development - £1000

The *Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Amendment) Order 2015* provides the following definition:

“householder application” means an application for—

- (a) planning permission for the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse, or
- (b) change of use to enlarge the curtilage of a dwelling house, for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse but does not include—
  - (i) any other application for change of use,
  - (ii) an application for erection of a dwellinghouse, or
  - (iii) an application to change the number of dwellings in a building;

Large major development is defined as development exceeding 24 dwellings or 0.99 hectares or 1999 square metres.

We will send you an acknowledgement of your request for pre-application advice upon receipt of a valid enquiry.

As a minimum, applicants for householder developments should expect to receive the following information within their written response:

- The relevant planning history of the site
- The relevant development plan policies against which the development proposal will be assessed
- Relevant supplementary planning guidance (i.e. design, conservation etc.)
- Any other material planning considerations
- An initial assessment of the proposed development

For all other development proposals, applicants will receive all the information outlined above, as well as advice as to whether any Section 106 Legal Agreement contributions are likely to be sought and an indication of the scope and amount of these contributions.

Without payment of the appropriate fee the LPA will be under no obligation to accept and process a pre-application enquiry form.

Advice for Listed Building Consent applications and advertisements can only be provided through the non-statutory service offered by the Local Planning Authority. Article 4 of the *Town and Country Planning (Pre-application Services) (Wales) Regulations 2016* stipulates that qualifying applications are applications for planning permission made to a Local Planning Authority for the development of land.

# BCBC's NON-STATUTORY PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE SERVICE

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.

For **all enquiries under the non-statutory service** 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
- Full contact details including phone number and email address;
- The appropriate fee – **The enquiry will not be registered on the system and no detailed work will be undertaken until the full fee has been paid;**
- An initial draft Design and Access statement and/or Heritage Statement;
- Access and parking arrangements;
- The submission may also need to be accompanied by ecological, landscape, ground 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 contact 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.

We will aim to reply to your enquiry within the target response periods as outlined in the charging schedule. However we cannot guarantee a response within this time period as we may be awaiting consultation responses etc. and we will contact you to agree a time extension. In particularly complex cases more time may be needed and we will advise you when you can expect a reply.

If we do not have enough information to answer your enquiry, 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 site visit or 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 from other interested parties such as the Highways Engineer, Building Conservation Officer 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 recommendation and will require the payment of additional fees (see Charging Schedule below).

Following the site visit/meeting we will confirm the advice in a formal letter.

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 document before the subsequent meeting.

Meetings will take place at the Civic Offices, Bridgend.

The Development and Building Control Manager has the right to decline a request for pre-application advice where it is considered that it is either inappropriate or unnecessary.

# WHAT ARE THE CHARGES?



## BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

### Guidance on Pre-Application Charges – Welsh Government Statutory Service from 16 March 2016 BCBC Non-Statutory Service from 13 June 2016 – **updated 2 April 2018**

Category/Scale of Development	WG Statutory Service - Written Advice Only	Non Statutory Service - Written Advice/Response Only	Written Advice and a Meeting (site or office)	Additional Written Advice and/or Meetings	Target Response Time from Enquiry or Meeting Date (Days)
Householder Advice re: Permitted Development	-	£25	£50	£25	14
<b>Other Permitted Development Enquiries:</b>	-				<b>14</b>
• Agricultural and Forestry development		£50	£75	£50	
• Telecommunications Operators proposals		£50	£75	£50	
• Changes of Use of land and buildings		£50	£75	£50	
• Commercial/industrial development		£50	£75	£50	
• Non-domestic micro-generation/renewable energy schemes		£50	£75	£50	
• Domestic micro-generation/renewable energy schemes		£25	£50	£25	
• Temporary Uses and Buildings		£25	£50	£25	
Householder design advice	£25	£90	N/A (site visit inc. in fee)	£50	21
Planning History	-	£40 per plot/site for applications since 1996 £80 per plot/site for applications since 1976	N/A	N/A	21

PD Rights Removal	-	£50 per plot	N/A	N/A	21
Compliance with Conditions/Notices	-	£50/£150	£100/£300	N/A	14
Works to Protected Trees	-	£50	£100	£50	14
Minor Agricultural and Forestry Development	-	£150	£250	£100	21
Minor Commercial Development/CoU* (up to 500 sq. m. gross floorspace)	£250	£250	£350	£200	21
Minor Works to Listed Buildings/in Conservation Areas	-	£100	N/A (site visit inc. in fee)	£50	21
Adverts	-	£100	£150	£100	21
Copies of Decision Notices	-	£10	N/A	N/A	7
<b>Copies of Approved Plans</b>		A4 plans – £1 per sheet A3 plans - £2 per sheet A2 plans - £4 per sheet A1 plans - £10 per sheet A0 plans - £20 per sheet			
Copies of S.106 Legal Agreements	-	£10	N/A	N/A	7
Copies of TPO	-	£10	N/A	N/A	7
Confirmation conditions/S.106 have been discharged	-	£100	£150	N/A	14

\* Pre-app advice fee to be determined by Planning Officers in conjunction with Economic Development e.g. for employment uses B1, B2 or B8

Category/Scale of Development	WG Service - Written Advice Only	Statutory Service - Written Advice/Response Only	Non Statutory Service - Written Advice/Response Only	Written and a <del>1-hour</del> Meeting (site or office)	Advice (site or and/or Meetings)	Additional Written Advice and/or Meetings	Target Response Time from Enquiry or Meeting Date (Days)
<b>Larger Scale Development</b>							
<b>New dwellings/conversion to residential</b>							
1-2 dwellings	£250	N/A site visit inc.	£350	£100	21		
3-4 dwellings	£250	N/A site visit inc	£500	£200	28		
5-9 dwellings (inc. Planning Obligations)	£250	N/A site visit inc	£1000	£300	35		
Rural Enterprise Dwelling	£250	N/A site visit inc	£600	£250	35		
Barn Conversions	£250	N/A site visit inc	£500	£200	28		
Agricultural and Forestry Development (500-1000 sq. m.)	£250	£300	£400	£150	28		
Commercial Development/CoU * (500 – 1000 sq. m.)	£250	£750	£850	£250	35		
<b>Non-PD Domestic Scale Renewable Energy Schemes**</b>							
- Small Scale Hydro Schemes	£250	£250	£350	£100	28		
- Solar Panels/Photovoltaics	£250	£250	£350	£100	28		
- Single Turbines up to 40m to blade tip	£250	£500	£600	£200	35		

\* Pre-app advice fee to be determined by Planning Officers in conjunction with Economic Development e.g. for employment uses B1, B2 or B8

\*\* To be confirmed by the Planning Officer based on the details provided

Category/Scale of Development	WG Service - Written Advice Only	Statutory - Written Advice/Response Only	Non Statutory - Written Advice/Response Only	Written and a 1-hour Meeting (site or office)	Advice (site or Meetings)	Additional Written and/or Meetings	Target Response Time from Enquiry or Meeting Date (Days)
Major Development (N.B. first scoping meeting with Officers is free)				Maximum – fee to be agreed following initial scoping meeting <b>(Minimum Fee of £1000)</b>			
10 or more dwellings (or 32 dph) inc. Planning Obligations	£600 < 25 units £1000 > 24 units	N/A site visit inc.		£2500		£1000	35
		N/A site visit inc.		£5000		£2500	42
Agricultural and Forestry Development (> 1000 sq. m.)	£600 < 2000 sq. m. £1000 > 1999 sq. m.	N/A site visit inc.		£1500		£500	35
		N/A site visit inc.		£2500		£1000	42
Commercial Development/CoU * (> 1000 sq. m.)	£600 < 2000 sq. m. £1000 > 1999 sq. m.	N/A site visit inc.		£3000		£1000	42
		N/A site visit inc.		£5000		£2500	42
Commercial Renewable Energy Schemes (inc. EIA)							
- Hydro Schemes	-	N/A site visit inc.		£500		£100	35
- Waste to Energy Schemes	-	N/A site visit inc.		£5000		£300	42
- Solar Parks/Farms	-	N/A site visit inc.		£5000		£500	42
- Wind Farms	-	N/A site visit inc.		£5000		£750	42
Winning and Working of Minerals	£600	N/A site visit inc.		£5000		£500	42
Waste Development	£600	N/A site visit inc.		£5000		£500	42

\* Pre-app advice fee to be determined by Planning Officers in conjunction with Economic Development e.g. for employment uses B1, B2 or B8



---

**Exemptions**

---

Town Council/Community Council Enquiries (except for Commercial Development)

Registered Charities (excluding Housing Associations)

Other BCBC Service Areas

Non-profit making groups/Community Interest Companies/Churches etc.

Conservation advice - urgent structural repairs to Listed Buildings only

Works that are required to improve facilities and access for the registered disabled  
(that would not be subject to a planning application fee)

---

**Specialist Advice****Additional Cost Per  
Hour (inc.  
meetings/site  
visits)****Additional flat rate cost  
per major development**

BCBC Ecologist

£50

£300

BCBC Highways

£50

£300

BCBC Building Conservation/Heritage

£50

£300

BCBC Public Protection

£50

£300

BCBC Economic Development

£50

£300

BCBC Parks

£50

£300

BCBC Land Drainage/SuDS

£50

£300

BCBC Parks Services

£50

BCBC Tourism

£50

---

## 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.

The HMRC have confirmed through the CIPFA VAT Committee that the statutory pre-application service provided by Welsh LPAs is to be treated as non-business and outside the scope of VAT. The non-statutory/discretionary service will remain VAT-able and the charging schedule above includes VAT.

For major developments a 'free' scoping meeting of up to 1 hour will be offered. The purpose of the scoping meeting is to allow the potential developer to explain and outline their scheme and for the LPA to identify the main issues. Some very basic guidance will be provided but there will not be any qualitative advice at this stage. Following the meeting, the case Officer will provide a written schedule outlining the scope of the PE, which Sections from the Council will be involved, a breakdown of the cost of providing the formal pre-application advice and a draft timetable for meetings/responses. It is then up to the applicant whether to engage our more detailed PE service or use the more limited statutory system.

The level and nature of staff attending the initial scoping meeting will be dependent on the nature of the development. Very large scale proposals will involve the Group Manager – Development, the Development and Building Control Manager and/or the Development Planning Manager.

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 and Building Control Manager has the right to determine the fee. In the event of any disputes, the issue will be referred to the Head of Regeneration and Development whose decision will be final. Where the appropriate fee is not paid within 15 working days after a reminder, no response will be given.

We would prefer payment to be made by credit card by telephoning the department (01656 643675) where the payment can be taken.

## 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 the 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. The decision will be made by the Development Control Committee or by Planning Officers and will 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 and can be superseded by new government advice or new planning policies.

Fees are non refundable.