

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL - COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE - DEVELOPMENT GROUP

CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE - GUIDANCE NOTE

We encourage and welcome the opportunity to provide advice before an application is made. Our aim is to enable and promote high quality development. 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 more 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, 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.

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.

You may be able to find the information you need on the planning pages of our website www.bridgend.gov.uk/planning or on the Planning Portal's website www.planningportal.gov.uk. Householders seeking to extend their homes can access our expert system as to whether planning permission is required and can also access our Supplementary Planning Guidance advice on householder development on the web.

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

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 Access and Design Statements and Energy Efficiency 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 charges for documents.

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 or outside the Council Offices or involve the Legal Officer, you will need to pay an additional fee.

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.**
- 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.

A standard form is available for use on the planning page of the Council's website.

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.

We will do our best to reply within 20 working days; however we cannot guarantee a response within this time period. In particularly complex cases, more time may be needed and we will advise you 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, Design Quality 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 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 document before the subsequent meeting.

Any meeting will normally take place at the Civic Offices, Bridgend. The Development Control Manager may exceptionally vary this to allow a request for a meeting on site or outside the Civic Offices. If so, the fee will be adjusted to reflect time and cost spent travelling.

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 or on 0.5ha of land or more;
- Change of use of buildings or and where the gross floorspace or site area is 1,000m² or more;
- New non-residential buildings and extensions to non-residential buildings of 1,000m² or more of gross floorspace;
- Mixed use developments where the combined gross floorspace is of 1,000m² or more.
- Other large scale or complex/specialist applications that require significant officer input (e.g to cover cases such as a Wind Farm which might otherwise fall as a 'minor development' based on these criteria)

Fee

- *£250 plus VAT (total fee £300) 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 plus VAT (total fee £600) 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 Development Control Manager will agree the need for additional meetings and may recommend the involvement of third parties if it is felt necessary.

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 1,000m²;
- New non-residential buildings and extensions to non-residential buildings from 100m² to less than 1,000 m² of gross floorspace;
- Mixed use developments where the combined gross floorspace from 100m² to less than 1,000 m².
- Advertisements

Fee

- *£150 plus VAT (total fee £180) for written advice only. Additional advice may be required and will be charged at the same rate;*
- *£250 plus VAT (total fee £300) 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 Development Control Manager will agree the need for additional meetings and may recommend the involvement of third parties if it is felt necessary.*

In the Development Control Manager's absence a Development Control Team Leader or the Development Planning Manager will act on his behalf.

Householder Development/Heritage Proposals (Listed Buildings, Conservation Area Consent, Design in Conservation Areas)/Council Proposals/Town/Community Council proposals/Where Permitted Development Rights Removed/District Valuer queries/Tree advice /A small development for a non profit making community facility scheme by a registered charity or Voluntary Sector Organisation.

In addition there will be no charges for:

- *Enquiries relating to developments involving the enlargement or change of use of existing business by up to 500 square metres falling within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8.*
- *Initial enquiries relating to key employment and regeneration sites identified in the Development Plan for uses falling within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8. (The provision of detailed advice following that initial meeting would be subject of the existing pre-application advice arrangements.)*

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 requests 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 Regeneration and Development whose word will be final. Where the appropriate fee is not paid within 15 works days after a reminder, no response will be given.

We would prefer payment to be made by credit card by telephoning the department (tel. No. 01656 643675) where the payment can be taken. Alternatively you may pay by cash at the Customer Services Centre of Bridgend County Borough Council.

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 the Development Control Committee or by planning officers 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, and can be superseded by new government advice or new planning policies.

Fees are non refundable.

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 per plot: £30*
- Research on Planning Histories per plot back to 1974: £30*

- Research on whether planning conditions discharged for minor/householder applicants £30*
- Research on whether planning conditions discharged for major applications £80*
- * *All charges include 20% VAT*
- If no research is required there will be no fee but a charge of £7.20 per decision notice and S106 Agreement will apply.