

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

GUIDANCE NOTES ON CHARGES FOR PRE- PLANNING APPLICATION ADVICE

Introduction

On October 1 2008 Winchester City Council introduced a scheme of charging for pre-application advice in relation to some types of development proposals. This note explains our procedures and the charges that will be applied and has been up-dated to reflect changes to the system made in October 2009. Pre-application enquiries can now be submitted in one of two ways. For people who want a comprehensive written response to a proposal, using the existing pre-application service, a **Full submission** should be made. Alternatively, if you only wish to discuss the principles of developing a site for a particular purpose, a **Development in Principle submission** is appropriate.

In addition to carrying out discussions with us, developers and applicants are advised to undertake independent consultations with stakeholders/interested parties such as Parish Councils and local residents as, if some of their concerns have been addressed and their input recognised, this is likely to result in the more efficient handling of the planning application and an improved scheme. This is a requirement of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the 1APP process for the registration and validation of planning applications, and further guidance on this can be found in the SCI, at <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/EnvironmentAndPlanning/Planning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/StatementofCommunityInvolvement/>, and in the 1APP validation and registration requirements at <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/EnvironmentAndPlanning/Planning/PlanningApplications/>

Pre-application charges are not refundable, regardless of the outcome of a formally submitted planning application.

What is Pre – Application Advice and what are its benefits

The pre-application advice to which this guidance note is relevant is provided in two forms and comprises either written comments offered by the Council on a specific proposal for a specific site (Full submission) or alternatively consists of a meeting between a planning officer and applicant/agent where the general principles of developing a site are discussed without commenting on detailed proposals (Development in Principle submission). Advice on the interpretation of policies in the development plan will be restricted to general interpretation based on land use principles.

Pre-application advice will provide the following benefits:

- An understanding of planning policies relevant to a particular development
- An understanding of other relevant material considerations

- Early identification of, and in some case input from, specialists required such as the Council's conservation or drainage officers. You may also need to seek advice from external consultees such as Natural England
- Amendment of proposal outside the formal application deadlines
- Improved design and quality of proposal
- Should result in the planning submission being comprehensive, containing all information required for validation and consideration
- Less time and cost when submitting the formal application
- Indication of the likely requirements for inclusion within any legal agreement

The use of the pre-application advice service does not preclude applicants and agents seeking separate advice from specialists such as landscape or conservation, for which there is currently no charge. However, where those specialists are required as part of the formal pre-application advice process, a charge for their time will be included in the overall cost.

Existing service

Advice on development proposals falling within Category (4) of the charges, set out in Pre-application Advice – Charges, will still be given by the use of the existing surgery service, in response to written enquires, and is not currently subject to a charge.

Advice on whether or not development requires planning permission will still be given by letter, in response to written enquiries, and will not be subject to a charge.

How to obtain pre-application advice

Complete the pre-application advice request form, indicating on the form whether you have chosen the Full or DIP submission. The form can be obtained by:-

- Downloading from our website at <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/EnvironmentAndPlanning/Planning/PlanningApplications/PlanningPre-ApplicationAdvice/>
- Telephoning 01962 840222 (Customer Services)
- Writing to Planning Administration, Civic Offices, Colebrook Street, Winchester, SO23 9LJ
- Collecting from City Council offices, Colebrook Street, Winchester, SO23 9LJ.

The completed form should be returned to the address on the form.

It must be accompanied by the correct payment, for which guidance can be found at <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/EnvironmentAndPlanning/Planning/PlanningApplications/PlanningPre-ApplicationAdvice/>, and by the appropriate plans and other documents, as shown below:

Full Submission:	Development in Principle submission:
<p>In the case of a Full submission you must complete the form, and provide four sets of sufficient supporting information to enable the Council to provide a good standard of advice. The minimum requirement for supporting information is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear and accurate description of the proposed development and a schedule of existing and proposed uses • A site location plan (scale 1:1250) • Photographs and sketch drawings showing the existing site, buildings and trees. • Sketch drawings showing the layout, height and scale of the development • Outline plan of proposed buildings (scale 1:200) • Draft design and access statement (this should be a contextual survey and analysis of the constraints and opportunities) • Names and addresses of all owners/mortgagees of the land (for work on the legal agreements where applicable) <p>If this information is not provided for a full submission, and the form is missing or incomplete, it may not be possible to offer you pre-application advice and your information and fee will be returned to you, or any advice that is given may be less useful than it would otherwise have been.</p>	<p>In the case of a request for development in principle advice it will be necessary to complete the form, and provide four sets of a location plan, site plan and photographs of the site and its surroundings.</p> <p>In the event that information is missing or incomplete it will not be possible to arrange a meeting to discuss your proposal and the submission and fee will be returned to you.</p>

How pre-application advice will be provided

On receipt of your form, payment and supporting information it will be checked, and if complete it will be acknowledged and given a unique reference. The acknowledgement will tell you the date by which you can expect to receive a response, and the name and contact details of the planning case officer who will be dealing with your enquiry.

Full Submission:	Development in Principle submission:
<p>Our aim is to respond to requests for pre-application advice, in writing, within 30 working days of receipt. In the event that this is not possible you will be advised accordingly.</p> <p>Once you have received the written advice for a Full submission, you should contact the case officer to arrange a meeting, if necessary, to discuss the advice and progress the development proposal, particularly if your development proposal relates to a large or complex development.</p> <p>For Category 1 and 2 development proposals, the cost of the first meeting is included in the initial pre-application advice charge. Any subsequent meeting will be charged at the rate indicated on the charging information.</p> <p>For Category 3 development proposals, the cost of a meeting is not included in the initial pre-application advice charge, as the nature of these applications means that a meeting may not be necessary. If a meeting is required it will be charged at the rate indicated on the charging information, and the charge is payable before the date of the meeting. Non payment will result in cancellation of the meeting.</p> <p>You will not be provided with written notes of the meeting, although you may wish to take your own and have them subsequently verified by the case officer.</p>	<p>Our aim is to hold a meeting within 20 working days. Please note that the Council will not write to you further to the meeting, but minutes will be taken and circulated as a record of the discussions which took place. You should also be aware that under this procedure officers will not comment on detailed plans. The aim is simply to identify relevant planning policies, constraints and other material considerations.</p> <p>The feedback will be of a more general nature than in the case of a Full submission because the level of information available to the planning officer will be limited, so you need to decide which option is best suited to your enquiry. Please note that if a Development in Principle submission contains detailed information it will not be registered as such, and you will be advised accordingly. You may wish to resubmit as a Full submission with the higher fee.</p>

Occasionally, it may be that because of the nature of your proposal, it is not appropriate or necessary to provide pre-application advice. In such cases, we will advise you accordingly and any payment made will be refunded.

Commitment

In order to achieve the maximum benefits from pre-application discussions the Applicant and the Council need to ensure that they are fully prepared for the discussions, and should commit to the following:

(a) Applicant

- Fully investigate site history and be familiar with relevant development plan policy, supplementary guidance, Government guidance and highway standards. This is constantly changing and you are advised to check for updates on the web or by contacting the Planning office.
- Visit the site, carry out appraisal and analysis to establish its characteristics, constraints and opportunities. Accurate site survey plans, levels and tree surveys may be required if an application is to be submitted. A contextual survey and analysis will also be required, which will form the basis of your design and access statement.
- Submit four copies of the pre-application advice request form and all pre-application plans in relation to either a Full submission, or a DIP, to enable efficient internal consultation, and the correct payment based on the pre-application advice charges on the web.
- Consider what payments or actions may be required for an associated legal agreement, and be prepared to discuss heads of terms for the agreement.
- For major developments, supply the names of all owners/mortgagees of the land to aid in drafting of the legal agreement.
- Note that where applications are submitted more than six months after the advice has been given, or where there has been a change in national or local planning policy, it may be the case that little or no weight may be attached to pre-application advice given.
- Pre-application views and opinions are given without prejudice to the consideration by the Council of a formal planning application, which will be subject to wider consultation or publicity, and advice given does not constitute a guarantee about the decision that will be made on a subsequent planning application.

(b) Council

- Will acknowledge your initial pre-application enquiry within 5 working days of receipt, by email or letter, and if it is valid will advise you of the reference number and the planning case officer, who will be your main point of contact.
- The case officer will carry out any internal consultations considered appropriate, research and analyse the site history and relevant planning

policy/guidance/legislation, and carry out an initial assessment of your pre-application drawings.

- You will receive a written response within 30 working days of receipt of your pre-application enquiry (Full submission) which will identify the key issues that the proposal has raised, or is likely to raise; advice on the relevant planning policies; advice on the information that will be required to submit a formal application; advice on any amendments alterations that are necessary to make the proposal acceptable in the opinion of the officer, or to improve the proposal and an indication of any financial contributions or other obligations that may be required. In relation to a Development in Principle submissions the Council will endeavour to meet with you within 20 working days of receipt of the enquiry and to provide minutes shortly after the meeting has taken place.
- The advice will be objective and accurate and without prejudice to the formal consideration of a planning application.
- On contact by the applicant following receipt of the written pre-application advice for a Full submission we will offer a meeting within fifteen working days of that contact.

It is anticipated that the use of the pre-application advice service will assist in ensuring that development proposals comply with policy requirements, add value to the environment and enable quality decisions to be made in a timely and transparent way, which will be of benefit to the developer, the local planning authority and the wider environment.

A list of frequently asked questions can be found on the web at <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/EnvironmentAndPlanning/Planning/PlanningApplications/PlanningPre-ApplicationAdvice/> which may assist you in using this process.