



CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATION/PLANNING ADVICE

GUIDANCE NOTE

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority welcomes and encourages discussion before a developer or landowner submits a planning application to the National Park.

To ensure that we are operating effectively and are able to sustain and improve our current levels of service, we have decided to charge for some pre-planning application advice - in addition to the fees payable for the submission of applications. This ensures that the cost of providing the service is recovered directly, and does not fall as a general cost to the council tax payer.

Some telephone and pre-application advice will still remain free of charge (including advice given at the surgery meetings that are currently available to members of the public for discussions relating to householder proposals or initial ideas on other small scale planning projects) but for the remainder, a simple charging system will be introduced.

This detailed guidance note deals with the arrangements now in place for handling pre-application advice and the charges that will apply. Please see other guidance notes on the Authority's web-site relating to other Planning related charges. If you want formal confirmation whether or not planning permission is required for a development, you will need to submit an application for a lawful development certificate.

WHAT ARE THE CHARGES?

We will NOT charge advice on:

- Alterations or extensions to single dwellings and other householder applications, for example garages/sheds/summerhouses/domestic micro-generation etc.) - except where a site visit is requested.
- Minor development relating to a small business (excluding redevelopment for non business purposes).
- Conservation advice (urgent structural repairs only).
- Works to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders or located in Conservation Areas.
- Advice on how to submit an application to establish whether planning permission is required.

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- Planning discussions relating to an enforcement investigation.
- Advice to Community Councils and County Councils.
- Advice to Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) in respect of Rural Exceptions Sites and other sites where proposals are wholly for affordable housing (e.g. sites that do not include open market dwellings) and where the RSL will retain ownership and management of the scheme.

We WILL charge for advice on:

Professional Agents—Replies to Written Requests for information on documents received from Solicitors, Developers or Professional Agents	£50 + VAT
Single dwellings - Site visits and written advice	£100 + VAT
Minor Residential Development (2-9 dwellings)	£500 + VAT Each additional meeting with Officers - £125 + VAT
Major Residential Development (10-49 dwellings)	£1,000 + VAT Each additional meeting with Officers £500 + VAT
If no numbers specified or a mixed use and/or complex proposal	Fee to be discussed and agreed
Other Minor development*	Written advice - £75 + VAT Meeting with officers - £125 + VAT
Other Major development **	Written advice - £250 + VAT Meeting with officers - £500 + VAT
If no floor space specified or the proposal is for a mixed and/or complex set of proposals.	Fee to be discussed and agreed

***Minor Development** = all other developments, including change of use, floorspace of up to 999 square metres or site area of up to 0.99 hectares.

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****Major Development** = all other developments, including change of use: 1000+ square metres or more of floorspace, or where the site area is between 0.5 and 2.0 hectares.

- If further meetings or requests for advice/information are sought then a further fee will be levied at the above rate (other than where specified in the above table).
- These fees cover administration costs and Officers' time for research, assessment, travelling time in the case of site visits, a meeting as necessary and a written response.
- Any request for pre-application advice/information must be accompanied by the relevant fee. Each project or separate site referred to in an enquiry will be charged at the appropriate rate.

WHY SEEK ADVICE?

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Development Control section is able to provide you with advice and information on a variety of matters that you will need to consider before you make an application for planning permission or listed building consent.

There are considerable benefits in seeking advice before making an application 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, ecology¹ or archaeology. Pre-application discussions can often benefit from the timely and constructive involvement of other interested parties. However it is acknowledged that the involvement of other stakeholders in the pre-application process can be resource intensive and this approach is most likely to be appropriate and effective for more complex schemes that generate a wide range of planning issues and potentially significant impacts. For reasons of confidentiality, you will need to agree to the involvement of other stakeholders in the pre-application process.

¹ Pre-application charges for ecology advice may apply, for further information please see:- http://www.breconbeacons.org/the-authority/planning/pdfs/guidance-note-pre-application-charges-for-ecology-and-wildlife-related-matters/attachment_download/file



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- 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.
- It can ensure an application is complete and comprehensive and to a satisfactory standard, avoiding rejection at registration stage or early refusal of permission because of inadequate or insufficient information.

WHAT ADVICE WILL BE PROVIDED?

Our pre-application advice will provide you with the following:

- Relevant planning history of a site;
- Identification of planning constraints;
- Identification of relevant planning policies;
- Information regarding potential planning obligations and relevant contacts;
- Relevant validation checklists to identify the information required for a particular type of application;
- Informal guidance on the suggested content of an application;
- Informal and without prejudice written summary of views by the Planning Officer.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO

If your enquiry is very straightforward, and is one where free advice is provided, you may telephone the Section or attend one of our advertised surgery meetings for advice.

For all enquiries we will normally ask you to write to us with details of your proposal if you want us to comment on the principle of development or a particular building/extension/design etc.

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For all enquiries you will need to write to us including the following information as a minimum:

- Description of the nature and scale of development proposed and the uses to which land and buildings are to be put;
- Full site address and location plan (1:1250 scale) with the site outlined in red;
- Site history i.e. occupancy of the site, uses etc;
- Photographs of the site;
- Sketch drawings providing details of the proposal. Floor plans for each floor of the proposed building together with at least sketch elevations that are sufficient to indicate the initial architectural approach and the materials proposed. Drawings should also show any adjacent buildings to identify the context of the scheme and;
- The appropriate fee.

Development Proposals may also need to be accompanied by an initial design and access statement, 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 check that the appropriate fee has been paid and whether all the necessary information has been submitted. If it has not, we will write to you confirming that we will not progress your enquiry, or agree to a meeting, until the appropriate fee has been paid and all relevant information submitted.

If the fee has been paid and all the relevant information submitted, then the Development Control Manager or a Principal Planning Officer will allocate your enquiry to the most appropriate officer (the 'Case Officer').

An acknowledgement will be sent within 3 working days of a valid enquiry being received in the Section and the acknowledgement will act as a receipt for any fee paid, confirm the details of the Case Officer handling it and the date you may expect to receive a written reply to a minor enquiry (within 20 working days from receipt).

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This written reply setting out our advice will comprise the service for the standard charge. Further enquiries will attract additional fees (see table of fees above).

If, on researching the enquiry, 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.

The written response will be verified by the Development Control Manager or a Principal Planning Officer and will outline the main relevant planning issues, matters agreed or raised at any meeting, and other constraints and requirements. The Development Control Manager and the Principal Planning Officers have the right to decline a request for pre-application advice where it is not considered either appropriate or necessary or where insufficient information has been provided. No charge will be made in these cases.

MEETINGS

If a meeting is requested, the Development Control Manager or the Principal Planning Officers will decide whether a meeting is necessary or whether suitable advice can be provided by letter. If it is agreed that a meeting is appropriate, the enquiry will be checked to see whether the appropriate level of information has been submitted as set out above, and the Case Officer will contact you to arrange a suitable date for a meeting (normally within 20 days of receipt of the request - however this will depend upon the complexity of the scheme and the amount of work that will be needed prior to a meeting including any time necessary to obtain initial views of other interested parties).

Attendance of other officers at the meeting, including specialist advisors, will be at the case officer's discretion.

Following the meeting, we will write to you confirming the Officers view. This will usually be within 15 working days unless the proposal is particularly complex, when an alternative timescale will be agreed at the earliest possible stage of the discussions. You may also take notes at the meeting and, if you wish, the case officer will check and amend these as necessary.

PLEASE NOTE

Any advice given by Authority officers for pre-application enquiries does not indicate any formal decision by the Local Planning Authority. Any views or opinions are given without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application.

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The final decision on any application that you may then make can only be taken after the Council has consulted local people, statutory consultees and any other interested parties. The final decision on an application will then be made by the Planning and Rights of Way Committee, or under delegated powers in accordance with the Authority's approved Scheme of Delegation, 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).

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.

It should be noted that the weight given to pre application advice may decline over time, subject to changing material circumstances.

Developers and applicants should be aware that information related to pre-application discussions may be subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The Act and the Regulations provide for some exemptions from the need to disclose commercially sensitive information and in cases where applicants consider that specific information is exempt from the requirements of the Act or the Regulations, the justification for their position should be provided to the local planning authority.