

INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES FOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

On 17 November 2010 the Planning Committee resolved to introduce charging for pre-application proposals. The charges will be introduced for all relevant pre-application proposals received on and after 1 January 2011.

The charging schedule and accompanying notes are shown below. It should also be noted that in respect of residential development, the charges apply to the gross number of dwellings being proposed.

	Categories of development proposals		Fee	Response time	Fee incl. VAT
A	Householder, small scale developments including small scale changes of use, trees, shopfronts, listed building consent		No charge	14 days	No charge
B	Residential: maximum of 5 dwellings	Non-residential: Small scale developments e.g. stables	£201 (excl. VAT)	21 days (no meetings held)	£241.20
C	Residential: 6-9 dwellings	Non-residential: Under 1,000sqm	£362 (excl. VAT)		£434.40
D	Residential: 10-49 dwellings	Non-residential: 1,000sqm – 10,000 sqm	£985 (excl. VAT)	Arrangements to be made for a meeting within 10 working days of registration of enquiry and meeting notes to be sent out within 10 working days following the meeting	£1182
E	Residential: 50+ dwellings	Non-residential: Over 10,000 sqm	£2010 (excl. VAT)		£2412

Notes

1. An additional charge will be made for credit card payment
2. The Council reserves the right to decline a request for pre-application advice where it is not considered either appropriate or necessary. Enquiries will only be registered once the correct fee has been paid.
3. **The above fee charges include a written response to your pre-application enquiry and if considered appropriate one meeting with a planning officer (up to 2 hours in duration). Unless there are exceptional circumstances a meeting will not be held for schemes in categories B and C, and the above charging levels reflect this situation. If no meeting is held a written response to most enquiries in these categories (i.e. B and C) will be provided within 21 days of the pre-application enquiry being registered.**
4. For schemes within categories D and E, if a meeting is considered appropriate the Case Officer will contact you within 10 working days to make the appropriate arrangements for the meeting. If a meeting is held, notes of the meeting will be issued within 10 working days of the meeting in place of a written response to the pre-application enquiry.
5. Follow up meetings/correspondence will be charged at same rate as detailed in the table.
6. If a proposal is presented to the Planning Department that is not currently covered by this charging regime, the fee to be levied and any associated arrangements e.g. Member's Forums at the request of applicants, will be subject to negotiation on an individual basis. These fees are likely to be set at a significantly higher scale than detailed above. There should be no assumption that a fee will not be charged.
7. For the avoidance of doubt sites proposing 100% affordable housing scheme on land not owned by the Council will be subject to the above fee charging regime.
8. Sites proposing developments on Council owned land – will be charged at a reduced rate.
9. The Council will endeavour to meet the timescales specified in this note, but if the timescales are not met the enquiry will still be dealt with and no refunds will be made.
10. Where requests cover more than one proposal, each proposed scheme will be charged separately at the above rates.
11. The fee charging regime will be subject to review.
12. Planning Performance Agreements are primarily aimed at major and complex development proposals. These are agreements entered into by the Local Planning Authority and developers to formalise a pre-application and planning application process, identifying expectations for both sides and key milestones. For agreements relating to pre-application advice they enable the costs or partial costs for providing that advice to be recovered from the developer, whilst being able to provide on-going dialogue between the parties. However Planning Performance Agreements cannot be forced upon either party and their use in Runnymede will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
13. Exemptions will be considered on a case by case basis, but in most cases, will be limited to proposals by state schools and local registered charities where proposals provide benefits to the wider community.

14. Planning Officers can only give a professional opinion on the merits of a pre-application scheme. It should be noted that pre-application negotiations are not a substitute for the formal planning application process and can offer no guarantees. All pre-application advice letters will contain the following caveat:

The advice given represents an Officer's informal opinion based on the information you have supplied and is not intended to bind the Local Planning Authority's decision making powers on any formally submitted application. All submitted applications will be the subject of publicity and consultation in accordance with statutory requirements and the Council's adopted procedures. These, and any other matters which may subsequently come to light, may result in additional issues being raised that are pertinent to the determination of the application. It should also be noted that subsequent alterations to local and national planning policies may affect the advice given.

If you wish to read the Committee report relating to the introduction of the pre-application charges please see the Committee agendas section of the Council's website. The minute of the meeting will be available on the relevant pages of the Council's website in due course. It should however be noted that the charges were shown in the Committee report as including VAT, although Members resolved to retain the charges shown but excluding VAT. The above table now also includes the VAT rate from 4 January 2011.