

# Charges for Pre-Application Advice

## Guidance Note



### **(1) Introduction**

Oxfordshire County Council determines planning applications for minerals and waste development and also applications for the County Council's own operational use, such as schools, highways and social services.

We strongly encourage all applicants to contact us for advice prior to submitting applications. We find that this has advantages for all parties as it allows potential issues to be explored at an early stage and ensures that applications are submitted with the relevant information. This in turn helps with the smooth processing of the application and enables a timely decision to be reached.

Providing this advice takes time and the current statutory fees do not cover the cost of this work. We have therefore decided that the cost of providing pre-application advice should be met by the developer rather than the public. This guidance note sets out a structured approach to pre-application advice and the charges that will accompany this.

### **(2) Pre-application advice - benefits to the applicant**

- We provide you with information about how the application will be determined which can help you to understand processes and timescales;
- We provide information on validation requirements which helps to make sure that your application will be accepted as valid when it is submitted;
- Cases where specialist input will be needed can be identified early, for example in relation to ecology, traffic or archaeology;
- Potentially unacceptable proposals (or elements of proposals) can be identified at the outset, saving you time and money in the submission of abortive applications, and reducing the likelihood of the council requesting amendments to applications;
- We will provide written confirmation of advice which is consistent, clear and specific to the proposal;
- Potential reduction in the time spent by your professional advisors in preparing the application.

### **(3) Pre-application advice - information that we require**

In order to obtain pre-application advice we ask you to submit:

- The pre-application advice request form (see attached at the end of this guidance note);
- Full site address and location plan;
- A written description of what's proposed;
- Details of the existing use of the site;
- Drawings (sketch drawings are acceptable at this stage) of the proposal including any floor plans and proposed remediation plans as appropriate;
- Any details you believe will be relevant to our assessment of the development or the site (the more information provided at this stage, the better the advice can be);
- The appropriate fee for pre application advice.

The location plan should show all the land necessary to carry out the proposed development outlined in red. It should be to a standard scale and show surrounding roads and buildings. Other land owned by the applicant should be shown enclosed in a blue line.

We will only provide advice once the fee is received. The fee can be paid by submitting a cheque made payable to Oxfordshire County Council. For developments for the County Councils own operational use, an internal cost code may be provided.

### **(4) Pre-application advice – what we will provide**

Pre-application advice will either be provided in writing following a request for a written response, or by means of a meeting in which case a written response will be provided after the meeting. All written responses will include details of:

- Relevant development plan policies and other material considerations relevant to the proposed development;
- Relevant planning history of the site known to officers;
- The information that would be required from you to validate a planning application for the proposed development;
- The process for determining an application including likely timescales for deciding the proposal;
- An indication (officer level) of the key policy issues relating to the proposal, those areas where there might be policy support for the proposal and those where the proposal might be at odds with policy;

- Advice on whether legal agreements may be required and what issues they might need to cover;
- An initial view on whether an Environmental Impact Assessment may be needed;
- Contact details for any other Council officers who may need to be involved in further pre-application advice, for example highways, archaeology, ecology or developer funding officers (although if such officers attend the pre-application meeting then confirmation of their advice will be included in the planning officer response).

#### **(5) Pre-application advice – what we cannot provide**

Pre-application advice can help to reduce the time taken to validate and process applications and also the amount of time spent by all professionals in putting an application together. However, we cannot do the applicant/agent's job for them. We are not able to design schemes and in order to provide helpful advice we will need good quality information about the development proposal and the site on which it is to be located.

We encourage applicants to engage early with the local community, including town and parish councils and we can advise you of appropriate ways to carry this out. However, we will not conduct pre application consultation for you.

#### **(6) Pre-application advice – timescales**

The timescales for the provision of pre-application advice are as follows:

- Acknowledgment - within 5 working days of receiving a request for pre-application advice we will contact you to confirm:
  - whether the request has been accepted;
  - if the request has not been accepted, what information is missing;
  - the name and contact details of the planning officer who will be providing the advice;
  - whether the input of specialist officers would be required;
  - details of the appropriate fee and how to pay it.
- Written responses will normally be provided within 15 working days of receiving such a request and payment of the appropriate fee.
- Meetings will normally be organised within 15 working days of receiving the request and the written response will normally follow the meeting within 5 working days of the meeting.

Meetings may either be held on site or at Oxfordshire County Council offices in Oxford, as appropriate and as requested by the applicant. It may also be appropriate for specialist officers to attend the meeting to discuss matters such as highways, archaeology, ecology or developer funding contributions.

## **(7) Pre-application advice - charges**

	<b>Minor Development *</b>	<b>Major Development #</b>
<b>Written Response</b>	£184	£264
<b>Meeting &amp; follow up written response</b>	£264	£526
<b>Specialist officers to attend meeting (per additional officer)</b>	£66	£66

# Major Development is defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. It includes the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits, waste development, the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more and development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

\* For the purposes of this guidance note all other developments are classed as Minor Development.

Meetings may either be held on site or at Oxfordshire County Council offices in Oxford, as appropriate and as requested by the applicant. It may also be appropriate for specialist officers to attend the meeting to discuss matters such as highways, archaeology, ecology or developer funding contributions.

## **(8) Pre-application advice - disclaimer**

Any advice given in relation to the planning history of the site, planning constraints or statutory designations does not constitute a formal response of the Council under the provisions of the Land Charges Act 1975.

Any pre-application advice given by Council officers does not constitute a formal response or decision of the Council with regards to future planning consents.

Any views or opinions expressed are given in good faith, and to the best of ability, without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application, which will be subject to public consultation and ultimately decided by the Council. The Council cannot guarantee that new issues will not be raised following submission of a planning application and consultation upon it.

You should be aware that officers cannot give guarantees about the final formal decision that will be made on your planning or related applications.

Contact details

For further information please contact:  
Development Management  
County Hall  
New Street  
Oxford  
OX1 1ND

Email: [planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

# Pre-application Advice Request Form

Please complete all sections of the form and return to:  
[planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or

Development Management  
County Hall  
New Street  
Oxford  
OX1 1ND

## 1. Agent Details

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone	
Email	

## 2. Applicant Details

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone	
Email	

## 3. Site Details

Address (with postcode)	
Grid Reference (8 figure)	

## 4. Description of Proposed Development

Please provide a brief description of the proposed development (full details should be attached)

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## 5. Type of Pre-Application Advice Sought

- Written advice only  
 Meeting with written advice

**6. Attached Information**

- Full explanation of proposed development
- Location Plan
- Details of the existing use of the site
- Other relevant drawings of the proposal
- Fee

**7. Additional Information**

Please list any relevant additional information about the site or the development that you have provided

**8. Signature:**

**Date:**