



Bristol City Council Development Management

Pre Application Advice for planning and
related applications

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Bristol City Council's Development Management Service

Advice Note – The Pre Application Advice Service

Purpose of the note

This note sets out the details of, and procedures for using, our Pre Application Advice Service and our enhanced Pre Application Advice Service using a Planning Performance Agreement.

What is pre application advice?

This is advice given to anyone who wishes to carry out development in the city, for planning and related developments, including Listed Building proposals. Advice given will usually cover:

- the merits of the development proposed, i.e. offering a headline view on whether it will receive officer support;
- the relevant policies against which the proposal will be assessed;
- who to engage with in the local community as you develop your proposal; and
- the processes involved.

What are the benefits of getting pre application advice?

It will:

- i. Identify those schemes which have little or no realistic chance of getting planning permission and highlight the 'show stopping' issues. This will save time and money on a scheme that will not get planning permission.
- ii. Set out the key issues that the proposed development will need to address.
- iii. Identify community and other related groups and/or elected members who you should be involving in developing your scheme.
- iv. Provide help on how to resolve any potential issues or mitigate any possible impacts before the application is submitted, and so make the process of getting planning permission smoother.
- v. For 'Major' applications, establish the benefits of using a Planning Performance Agreement – see also the [Bristol Planning Protocol](#))
- vi. Give you the scope of information (from the [Local List](#)) that you would need to make a planning application, so that when you submit the application you have a bespoke validation list.
- vii. Start to build and establish a relationship with the planning officers and other council officers (e.g. internal consultees

including Building Control officers¹) who will make up the Pre Application/Development Team.

- viii. For the very large schemes we may use a Development Team approach² controlled by a Planning Performance Agreement.

What is the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) Service?

This is an enhanced Pre Application Enquiry service offered on a selected range of significant major development projects. There is no definition of what type of development falls into this category, but would include developments that propose:

- More than 100 dwellings
- Over 10,000 sq m of commercial space, or
- Sites of 2 hectares or more

The service is charged under a separate regime and can only be delivered with an extra payment to the usual Pre-Application Advice charges. The extra payment will be used to secure extra resources to either undertake the PPA process or to free up time for in house officers.

Applicants using the PPA Service can expect:-

- A dedicated principal planning officer (i.e. Team Manager or equivalent)
- A meeting with the Head of Development Management
- A bespoke and agreed PPA
- A targeted planning committee date
- Programmed meetings on a 4 week cycle
- Use of the Development Team, i.e. a meeting with all BCC stakeholders attending
- The resources to present the proposal at the Bristol Urban Design Forum (BUDF)

¹ NB Building Control offer a free pre application advice service- Go to [Building Control](#) or ring 0117 9223000 if you want to take up this offer.

² The Development Team is a regular internal meeting of council officers representing the range of services involved in development proposals. The outcome of this meeting will form part of the Pre-Application advice.

- The opportunity for a Members and Stakeholder meeting, i.e. a meeting with elected members and representatives of the local community
- A pre submission audit to assess your final application package is complete for validation purposes, to ensure registration with 24 hours, and that the application is complete for a decision to be made

What won't Pre Application advice do?

It can't deliver a guaranteed outcome, i.e. a guaranteed planning or Listed Building consent permission or a formal view of the planning committee.

This is because:

- a) applications are subject to a wider consultation process than a pre application enquiry, and issues may come to light that are not known at the time of giving the advice, and
- b) the views given will be current at the time of giving the advice but changes in planning circumstances and policy will need to be taken into account when the application is decided; and
- c) larger and/or more contentious applications will be decided by a planning committee made up of elected members. Whilst the committee will have an officer report and recommendation to consider, members may decide to give different weight to key issues and other material considerations, in arriving at their decision.

On what cases do we offer the pre application advice service?

The service is available for many types of development, including all new build residential and commercial proposals (both Major and Minor developments). Whilst we would always encourage engagement with us at the earliest opportunity, the Pre-Application Advice Service can consider schemes at outline stage and at the 'Reserved Matters' stage.

For a full list of the types of development covered by this process see Appendix 5, but please note we do not offer the Pre Application Advice Service for Householder applications or for single changes of use.

Will the enquiry be confidential?

We see significant benefit in engaging the local community³ in pre-application discussions as proposals are being developed, and will encourage this to

³ Including elected members where appropriate

happen at an early stage⁴. To assist in this, we let the Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network⁵, the Neighbourhood Planning Forums, and elected Members know that a Pre-Application enquiry has been received.

Is there a charge for the service?

For the pre applications enquiry service we will charge on a cost recovery basis, and this includes pre application enquiries made after an application has been refused.

The cost will depend on the scale of the development proposed and the level of service i.e. is the Development Team approach needed or whether the Planning Performance Agreement approach is used. Appendix 5 sets out the charges, and this is related to the amount of officer time that dealing with the enquiry will take. Please note that the service is VAT liable and subject to VAT at the usual rate of 20%.

As charging is discretionary we can in certain circumstances waive the charges. Currently the only cases where we **do not charge** are

- Developments by Registered Providers (Housing Associations) of less than 250 units which include at least 25% affordable rented or social rented housing.
- Developments proposing disabled access to Listed Buildings.

In all cases there will be an upfront charge which will cover the costs up to and including us providing our written advice, and the review meeting if needed. For most cases there will be no further charge.

For the larger and more complex cases, such as those where we use the Development Team or arrange a Development Management Forum, there will be an extra charge on an hourly rate. NB before we start to incur additional costs (i.e. over and above the upfront charge) we will let you know and seek your agreement before we start any work.

⁴ See NPPF para 188 and 189

⁵ Bristol [NPN](#) is a network of voluntary groups in the Bristol area, working to get better involvement in how their neighbourhoods are developed, through the planning system.

If, after you have received our response and we have closed the case, you want further advice e.g. because of changing circumstances, this will be chargeable. If this is the case we will tell you before undertaking any work.

For Super Major developments⁶ and as set out in [The Bristol Planning Protocol](#) we offer, without charge and as long as essential information such as site location and general parameters of the proposed development are provided, the opportunity for an informal discussion in advance of submitting a pre-application enquiry. This is known as an Inception Meeting and will be serviced by either the Head of Development Management or a Team Manager.

This could be either a telephone conversation OR a meeting, and will be limited to a maximum of 1 hour. The objective of the phone call/meeting will be to:-

- identify the issues and information that will be considered by the council's pre application team,
- identify any fundamental obstacles to progressing the proposal; and
- lead you through the pre-application enquiry process, including how we would like the enquiry submitted (eg email/paper/disc)

What will the advice look like?

The advice will be in writing, and for most development proposals we will use a standard template (see Appendix 3), although in some of the more complex cases this could be supported by a letter and/or a meeting, which could be on site.

If appropriate, part of the advice will include a bespoke check list of all the items needed to validate the proposed application. (See appendix 4)

In all cases when preparing the advice we will be guided by what you have told us about your proposed development and by what you want the response to cover.

Service Standards

Our aim is to respond as quickly as is possible, and targets are:

- Super Major Applications and proposals using the Premium Pre-Application Service with a PPA: to be agreed on a case by case basis.

⁶ Super Major developments are 100 residential units and above, and 10,000sq m of commercial floorspace and above

- Major and Minor development: a written response within 30 working days.

How can I apply to use this service?

You need to send enough information to support your request, depending on how complex it is.

We now work electronically, so we will only accept requests and payments for the Pre Application Advice electronically. The options are:-

- Make a Pre Application Enquiry – Use our [pre-application enquiry form](#) and attach the form any other details to an email to development.management@bristol.gov.uk
- Apply for an inception meeting relating to a Super Major development – email our Major Applications Team development.management@bristol.gov.uk
- For both the Pre Application Advice Service and the Premium Planning Agreement Service payments can be made either through our [website](#)⁷ or by telephone⁸.

Appendices

1. Steps in the process
2. Pre Application Advice – Request Form
3. Pre Application Advice – Template
4. Bespoke validation schedule
5. Charging Schedule
6. Contacts
7. Further Information

⁷ Please Note there is a maximum limit of £5000

⁸ Telephone us on 0117 922 3000 (you'll need to know the amount – See Appendix 5)

Appendix 1 – Steps in the Process

1. Applicants/Agents –

Submit (electronically) the Pre Application Enquiry setting out what you want from the enquiry and with enough information⁹ so that your proposal can be easily understood, and with the required fee (on-line or by phone). You can use the Advice Request Form (see Appendix 2) but it is not a requirement.

2. We will :

On Receipt

- a. Record the pre application enquiry on our data base
- b. Electronically acknowledge receipt of the enquiry and the fee
- c. Allocate the case to one of the Planning Team Managers to review and if appropriate allocate to a member of their team. The intention is that the officer who deals with the enquiry will be the case officer should an application be submitted, although in some cases, e.g. due to workload, a new case officer may be allocated. If this happens, and as long as there is no change in planning circumstances, we will stand by the given pre application advice
- d. circulate the details of the enquiry to the local ward members and to the [Neighbourhood Planning Network](#) (NPN)

The Case Officer will

- (i) Contact you and let you know the process for responding to the inquiry. This could include arranging a meeting, which could take place on site
- (ii) If the case is one where there are additional costs, we will contact you and let you know before hand
- (iii) Respond to the enquiry in writing

⁹ E.g. plans, sketch proposals, photographs etc

Appendix 2 – Pre Application Advice request Form

Development Management Pre-application advice - Request form

Please read the guidance notes to help you complete this form

1 Your details

Applicant /
agent name:

Address:

Daytime Tel
No:

Email:

2 Location of proposed development

Please provide the site address of the development site or building

Address:

3 Current (or last known) land use

Please confirm the current or last use of the site

4 Description of proposal

Please provide an accurate, detailed description of the proposed development

5 Extent of the advice sought

Please confirm whether you are seeking headline views or a full appraisal. Please state what local plan policies and guidance you have used in preparing your scheme.

Headline views Full appraisal Planning Performance Agreement

6 Plans and supporting information *(please refer to guidance note 6)*

A site location plan clearly identifying the site or building in question must be submitted. The level of further detail required will be dictated by the complexity of the proposal. If you are unsure about the level of detail to be submitted, please contact us for advice. Please specify plans/details that have been submitted.

Site location plan Sketch plan Block plan Photographs

Other supporting material
(please specify)

7 Other information

Please provide any other information that you would like us to take into account when considering your proposal/request for advice.

8 Fees *(please refer to guidance note 8)*

Please confirm what fee you have paid and how you have paid it (Online or by phone). Please note that pre-application fees are subject to VAT.

Payment method

Fee paid

£

Print Name

Date:

Please return to:

development.management@bristol.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to your pre-application enquiry please contact us at the above e-mail address or telephone 0117 922 3000.

Appendix 3 – Pre App Advice Report Template

Bristol Development Management Pre Application Advice Report – Template

1	Site Address:	Ref No:
2	We understand your proposal to be.... <i>In this section of the report we will set out what we think you want to do</i>	
3	Summary of Advice¹⁰ <i>In this section we will summarise the advice</i>	
4	Things that you need to be aware of.... <i>In this section we will explain if there are any previous planning applications or site issues that you need to take into account. We will also say if the development is liable for CIL</i>	
5	Planning Policies that you need to be aware of.... <i>In this section we will list the main planning policies that are relevant to your proposal</i>	
6	Our initial headline views about your proposal.... <i>In this section we will say what we think about your proposal. This will include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>our view about the likelihood of permission being granted</i> ▪ <i>a schedule of the documents/supporting information that you will need at validation (this could be a separate document)</i> ▪ <i>advice on how the application should be submitted (eg electronic or paper and how many copies/size of files etc)</i> 	
7	Things we recommend you do. ... <i>In this section we will explain what you should do next. This may include advice on :-</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>how to improve your proposal to make it acceptable; and</i> ▪ <i>Pre application engagement with the local community and</i> ▪ <i>who you should contact prior to submitting an application.</i> 	
8	Information we consider is necessary to accompany your planning application.... <i>In this section we will provide a checklist of the documents we consider are needed to make the applications valid i.e. a bespoke validation list (See Appendix 4) NB please include a completed checklist with your application.</i>	
Case Officer:		Date:

¹⁰ NB The views given will be current at the time of giving the advice, but changes in the planning circumstances can change and will need to be taken into account when any subsequent application is determined.

Appendix 4 – Documents to accompany the application¹¹

Pre Application Reference:	Site Address	
	Case Officer	

DOCUMENTS¹²

Local List Item	Y/N		Local List Item	Y/N	
	Needed	Validation Check		Needed	Validation Check
1) Affordable Housing Statement			14) Noise Impact Assessment		
2) Air Quality Assessment			15) Open Space Assessment		
3) Biodiversity Survey and Report			16) Planning Obligations (s106) Statement		
4) Coal Mining Risk Assessment			17) Sustainability Statement and Energy strategy		
5) Community Infrastructure Levy – Question Form			18) Sustainable Drainage System Strategy		
6) Community Involvement Statement			19) Telecommunication information		
7) Economic Statement			20) Town Centre Uses – impact assessment		
8) Environmental Impact Assessment			21) Transport Statement/ Assessment		
9) Flood Risk Assessment/Sequential Test Evidence			22) Travel Plan		
10) Foul Sewerage & Utilities Assessment			23) Tree Survey		
11) Heritage Statement			24) Ventilation and Extraction Statement		
12) Land Contamination Assessment			25) Wildlife Survey and Report		
13) Lighting Assessment					

¹¹ NB Please include a completed form with your application, and if you are not providing documents identified above, please follow the Article 10(A) procedures.

¹² You will also need to submit plans and drawings to support your application and further guidance is [Making a planning application – Guidance for applicants – Plans and drawings to be submitted with planning applications](#)

Appendix 5 – Charging Schedule

Please note that the figures set out below include VAT at 20% and that we also will only accept payment through our [website](#)¹³ or by phone¹⁴.

Pre Application Advice						
Type of development	Fixed Fee			Additional Hourly Rate		
	Fee	VAT	Total Payable	Fee	VAT	Total Payable
Large Scale Major or Special Case¹⁵ Applications (Over 100 dwellings or over 10,000sq m of commercial floor space. Where the number of dwellings or floor space figure is not given, the site is 2 hectares or more)	£2,875	£575	£3450	£115	£23	£138
Major Applications (10 residential units and above and 1000sq m of commercial floor space)	£1,450	£290	£1740	£115	£23	£138
Minor Development – Type 2 (Covers proposals for 5–9 new residential units, including changes of use to flats, and mixed changes of use from 501 to 999m2)	£290	£58	£348	£115	£23	£138
Minor Development - Type 1 (Covers proposals for 1–4 new residential units, including changes of use to flats, and mixed changes of use up to 500m2 in size)	£190	£38	£228	n/a	n/a	n/a
Listed Building Consent¹⁶	£100	£20	£120	n/a	n/a	n/a
Listed Building Consent (with site visit)	£170	£34	£204	n/a	n/a	n/a
Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) Service						
<p>The fee will vary depending on the scale, complexity and the resource required to deliver the level of service requested. Typically this will range between £15,000 and £30,000 and is also subject to VAT.</p> <p>This charge will include the Pre-Application Enquiry fee. Please contact us for an informal discussion if you are looking to use this service (See contact details in Appendix 6.)</p>						

¹³ Please Note there is a maximum limit of £5000

¹⁴ Telephone us on 0117 922 3000 (you'll need to know the amount – See Appendix 5)

¹⁵ Such cases will be below the Large Scale Major threshold, but because of the local circumstances need to be subject to a PPA

¹⁶ If planning advice is also needed, then both fees will apply

Appendix 6 – Contacts and other details

- [Pay Online](#)
- Web site: [Make a pre-application enquiry](#)
- Other relevant documents:
 - [Bristol Local Plan](#)
 - [The Bristol Planning Protocol](#)
- [Neighbourhood Planning Network](#)
- [Bristol Building Control](#)¹⁷
- Email: development.management@bristol.gov.uk

Appendix 7 – Further Information

- Local Government Association and RTPI Publication [‘10 Commitments for effective pre-application engagement’](#)
- Planning Advisory Service [The Pre-application suite](#)

¹⁷ Call 0117 9223000 for free of charge Building Regulations advice