



Bristol City Council

Development Management

Pre Application Advice for planning applications

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Bristol Development Management

Advice Note – The Pre Application Advice Service

Purpose of the note

This note sets out the procedures for using our Pre Application Advice Service for planning and related applications, including Listed Building applications.

What is pre application advice?

This is advice given to anyone who wishes to carry out development in the city, and will include advice on:

- 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.

NB It is important to note that pre application advice is distinct from the general guidance given over the phone using the [Duty Planner](#)¹ telephone system. The purpose of the Duty Planner service is to offer guidance to members of the public on:-

- an explanation of the pre application process,
- the likely planning issues on straightforward cases such as householder applications, and
- what will be needed to submit a formal pre application advice enquiry

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.

¹ Contact details at the end of the note.

- 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 officers²) who will make up the Pre Application/Development Team.
- viii. For the very large schemes we may use a Development Team approach³ controlled by a Planning Performance Agreement, and include advice on Masterplans and Concept statements, with the option of a Development Management Forum⁴.

What won't Pre Application advice do?

It can't deliver a guaranteed outcome, i.e. a guaranteed planning 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.

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ Development Management Forum is a series of meetings, workshops etc. to facilitate discussions between developers, local councillors and local community groups.

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

All types of development⁵ including:

1. All new build residential and commercial proposals (both Major and Minor developments, and
2. Other developments including:
 - Advert applications
 - Changes of use
 - Householder extensions⁶
 - Listed Building proposals

Will the enquiry be confidential?

We see significant benefit in engaging the local community⁷ in pre-application discussions as proposals are being developed, and will encourage this to happen at an early stage⁸. To assist in this, we let the Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network⁹, the Neighbourhood Planning Forums, and elected Members know that a Pre-Application enquiry has been received.

Once an application relating to the same development proposal as the pre-application enquiry is submitted, we will publish the details of the enquiry on our web site. This will include the council's written advice and the documents on which the advice was based.

Is there a charge for the service?

For the formal 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. Appendix 5 sets out the charges.

As charging is discretionary we can in certain circumstances waive the charges.

⁵ This will include applications at outline or full application stage and reserved matters

⁶ NB we do not provide a 'does it need planning permission' advice service for extensions to houses. For these enquiries, go to the Planning Portals website and the [interactive guidance](#)

⁷ Including elected members where appropriate

⁸ See NPPF para 188 and 189

⁹ 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.

Currently the only cases where we **do not charge** are:

- developments in the Temple Quay Enterprise Zone
- for developments proposing disabled access to Listed Buildings

For Major applications¹⁰ 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 formal pre-application enquiry.

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)

Planning Performance Agreement Service

This is a 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 offers an enhanced pre-application advice service which 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 Premium Service can expect:

- A dedicated principal planning officer (i.e. Team Manager or equivalent)

¹⁰ Major Applications are 10 residential units and above, and 1000sq m of commercial floorspace and above

- A meeting with the Development Management Service Manager
- A bespoke and agreed PPA
- A targeted planning committee date
- Programed 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)
- 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 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.

Once you have received your written advice, we offer the opportunity for a single review meeting with the case officer, the purpose of which is to discuss the scheme and comments issued.

Charging Schedule

The charging schedule (see Appendix 5) 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%.

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 a 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.

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.

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.
- Major and Minor development: a written response within 30 working days.
- Other developments – a written response within 20 working days
- Calls to the duty planner system: verbal response within 24 working hours

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

Appendix 1 – Steps in the Process

1. Applicants/Agents –

Submit (electronically is preferred) the Pre Application Enquiry setting out what you want from the Enquiry and with enough information¹¹ so that your proposal can be easily understood, and with the required fee. 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 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 standby 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

¹¹ Eg plans, sketch proposals, photographs etc

Appendix 2 – Pre Application Advice request Form

Development Management Pre-application advice - Request form

This form is also available from the council's website www.bristol.gov.uk/planningpreapp
Please read the guidance notes to help you complete this form

1	Your details		
	Applicant / agent name:	<input type="text"/>	
	Address:	<input type="text"/>	
	Daytime Tel No:	<input type="text"/>	Email: <input type="text"/>

2	Location of proposed development	
	Please provide the site address of the development site or building	
	Address:	<input type="text"/>

3	Current (or last known) land use	
	Please confirm the current or last use of the site	
		<input type="text"/>

4	Description of proposal	
	Please provide an accurate, detailed description of the proposed development	
		<input type="text"/>

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 <input type="checkbox"/> Full appraisal <input type="checkbox"/>	

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)

Please note: Sending an electronic copy is the best way to submit documents as it makes it easier to share with other council officers. For larger schemes, one paper copy is helpful.

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. Paying online or by phone is the preferred method but any cheque is to be made payable to Bristol City Council. Please note that pre-application fees are subject to VAT.

Payment method

Fee paid £

Print Name

Date:

Please return to:

Email development.management@bristol.gov.uk

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 Advice¹² <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:

¹² 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 application¹³

Pre Application Reference:	Site Address	
	Case Officer	

DOCUMENTS¹⁴

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					

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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 the standard rate of 20%.

Type of development	Meetings included	Fixed Fee			Additional Hourly Rate		
		Fee	VAT	Total	Fee	VAT	Total
Super Major Over 100 dwellings Listed Building Consent (with site visit)		PPA ONLY, POA RANGING £30-50,000					
Large Major Over 25 dwellings or over 2,000 sqm	2	£8,333.33	£1,666.67	£10,000	£250	£50	£300
Small Major Under 24 dwellings or over 1,000 sqm	2	£4,166.67	£833.33	£5,000	£250	£50	£300
Large Minor 5-9 dwellings or under 1000sqm	0	£833.33	£166.67	£1,000	£250	£50	£300
Minor Development Under 5 dwellings or under 500sqm	0	£416.67	£83.33	£500	£250	£50	£300
Listed Building Consent¹⁵	0	£208.33	£41.67	£250	£250	£50	£300
Listed Building Consent with site visit	1	£416.67	£83.33	£500	£250	£50	£300
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 £30-50,000 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</p>					

¹⁵ If planning advice is also needed, then both fees will apply

Appendix 6 – Contacts and other details

- Payment Details: <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/nav/planning-and-building-regulations#pay>
- Web site: [Planning Pre Application Enquires](#)
- Other relevant documents:
 - [Bristol Local Plan](#)
 - [The Bristol Planning Protocol](#)
- [Neighbourhood Planning Network](#)
- [Bristol Building Control](#)
- Email: development.management@bristol.gov.uk

Appendix 7 – Further Information

- the '[10 Commitments](#)'
- Planning Advisory Service [The Pre-application suite](#)