



Charging for pre-application advice

Background

This guide deals with how we handle pre-application planning advice.

Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council are able to provide you with advice and information on planning prior to the submission of a planning application. So we can provide the best possible advice and information within an appropriate timescale it is important that you provide us with as much clear information as possible regarding your proposed 'development'.

The service is intended to provide an indication of whether your proposal is likely to gain planning permission or not, what the key issues are for consideration and what you would need to submit with any application that you make.

Charges will apply for all pre-application advice given in accordance with the scale of fees and categories as outlined in the table of fees section. Charges are in addition to the actually set planning application fees.

Permitted development enquiries

Many small scale extensions do not need planning permission and fall within "permitted development" rules. You can find out more about what can be built without planning permission on our website. If you wish to have a formal letter from the council to confirm such please complete an assessment form and submit with a fee of **£50.30** including VAT for householder **or £58.80** including VAT for non-householder.

Benefits of the service

We encourage and welcome the opportunity to provide advice before an application is made. There are considerable benefits in seeking advice before making an application:

- It gives you an opportunity to understand how planning policies will be applied to your development.
- It can identify at an early stage where there is a need for specialist/technical input, for example on listed buildings, trees, highways, landscape, noise, transport, contaminated land, ecology and archaeology.

- It will assist you in preparing proposals for formal submission which, providing you have taken our advice fully into account, is likely to be handled more efficiently.
- It may lead to a reduction in time spent by your professional advisors in working up proposals.
- It may indicate at an early stage that a proposal is 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.

Pre-application advice service

If you wish to take advantage of our pre- application advice service it couldn't be easier. Simply fill out the pre-application advice request sheet and email it together with your supporting plans, photos etc. to the address provided in contact details section.

What you need to provide is outlined on the pre-application form.

What we will provide is:

- A response in writing within 15 working days for smaller schemes. In this context, a smaller scheme consists of less than 10 dwellings, a proposed floor area of less than 1,000 metres squared or a site area of less than 1ha. A larger scheme is one which falls above these thresholds.
- A response in writing within 20 working days for larger schemes.
- A meeting/s with your representatives and relevant consultees will be convened - up to a maximum of 3 meetings of no more than 2 ½ hours each (additional meetings may be arranged but would incur an additional charge).
- Identification of the relevant site planning history.
- Identification of the relevant constraints affecting the site.
- the potential issues/impacts across the site boundaries.
- Consultation with specialist colleagues and invitation for them to attend any meetings where appropriate.
- Where a planning obligation (Section 106 Agreement) is likely to be required, we would seek to agree the likely content of such an agreement prior to the submission of an application.
- Confirmation of what information/studies/ reports etc. are likely to be required/ submitted with your application.
- Guidance how best to undertake consultation prior to the submission of the application with local residents and other groups.
- An informal indication of the likely outcome of your proposed development, with an indication, where possible, of how it could be amended to improve the chances of a successful outcome.

If you are unsure of the correct fee or category your proposal falls within, please

contact the planning department for further advice.

Any informal advice given is not binding on the council and is given in the spirit of helpfulness and is based upon the information provided to the Planning Officer.

Planning Performance Agreement (PPA)

For large scale and more complex planning proposals a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) may be beneficial. The agreement sets out a project plan to manage the proposal. Applicants should contact a planning officer to discuss this at the earliest possible stage.

Charging for pre-application advice

We do not charge for pre-application advice for new and expanding businesses creating employment opportunities.

We also do not charge for pre-application advice for developments that meet environmental standards or deliver a meaningful contribution to carbon reduction.

From 19 July 2021, pre-application advice applications will have their fee refunded where the applicant commits to and delivers on:

- The installation of a low carbon/renewable energy technology on an existing building (solar panels, heat pumps etc).
- Householder developments that include the installation of low carbon/renewable energy technology (e.g. extensions with a solar panel etc) that exceed the policy/regulatory requirements in operation at that time.

To request a refund, please email the Planning Support Team planning@wychavon.gov.uk with details of the pre-application advice application, the relative planning application and a signed letter stating which of the above points you committed to and the date of completion.

Pre-application advice charges for businesses

The table below sets out our fees for offering pre-application advice from the 1 April 2022 for residential developments.

Residential development (including one-for-one replacements, conversions and sub-divisions)	Development site area	Proposed gross floor area (measured externally in metres squared)	Fee for the first three meetings (including VAT)	Fee for additional meetings, (per meeting and including VAT)
1 to 4 dwellings	Less than 0.5ha	500 or less	£346.20	£139.75
5 to 9 dwellings	0.6 to 0.99ha	501 to 999	£693.00	£139.75
10 to 49 dwellings	1 to 1.25ha	1,000 to 2,499	£1,370.50	£690.60
50 to 199 dwellings	1.26 to 2ha	2,500 to 9,999	£2,749.40	£1,039.85
200 or more dwellings	More than 2ha	10,000 or more	£4,124.50	£1,381.00

The table below sets out the fees for offering pre-application advice from the 1 April 2022 for other types of development.

Type of development	Fee (including VAT)	Fee for additional meetings, (per meeting and including VAT)
Advertisements	£72.65	£39.20
Change of use	£206.75	£106.30
Telecommunications	£206.75	£106.30
Glasshouses or Poly Tunnels	£305.90	£139.75
Householder development	£50.30	Not applicable
All other development proposals not falling within any of the above categories such as variation of removal of conditions, car parks, roads and certificates of lawfulness	£139.75	£72.65

Where a development proposal falls within one or more categories, the higher fee will apply.

Payment should be made at the time of the pre-application advice request.

Payment can be easily made over the telephone by calling 01386 565565 or alternatively by cheque payable to Wychavon District Council.

Exemptions

Advice sought in the following categories is free:

- Where the enquiry is made by a local authority or county council.
- Where the enquiry is made by a parish or town council.
- Where the enquiry is made by a housing association, registered social landlord, or an equivalent affordable housing provider or an architect/agent

- acting directly on their behalf.
- Where the development is for the direct benefit of a disabled person, i.e. an extension, ramp, annex (excludes a new dwelling house), (and as such there would be no fee incurred to make the planning application).
 - Works to listed buildings and conservation area consents which do not require planning permission.
 - Works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order or trees located within a conservation area.
 - Advice on how to submit a planning application or a fee enquiry.
 - Planning discussions in relation to enforcement investigations.

Freedom of information

The pre-application advice service is a confidential fee-based process, however, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulation 2004 we may receive a request to provide information regarding pre-application advice.

Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may involve some information to be released. We may contact you if such a request is received.

Contact details

Please email your completed pre-application request sheet to planning@wychavon.gov.uk

Our postal address is: Planning Services Wychavon District Council Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 1PT.

You can telephone us by calling 01386 565565 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

You can find more information on our website at www.wychavon.gov.uk/planning

General information

- No chargeable advice will be provided, or your request considered, without receipt of the relevant fee.
- Meetings are not a compulsory element of the pre-application advice process and will only be conducted where agreed by both parties. Unfortunately no refund or reduction in the fee will be available should a meeting not be taken up.
- There will be a presumption for meetings to take place at the Wychavon Civic Centre, Pershore unless justification or necessity requires a site meeting.
- The attendance of consultees at meetings cannot be guaranteed, however

- wherever possible and necessary, invitations will be issued.
- Please note the additional fee requirements in relation to highway advice, other consultees may also make charges in the future.
 - Where a meeting is held in the first instance prior to initial written advice, a timescale for the follow up written response will be agreed at the meeting. Wherever possible, the first meeting will be held within the response times noted above. Subsequent meetings will be dependent on the progress with the proposals and subject to availability of the Planning Officer and relevant consultees.
 - All advice is provided without prejudice to the outcome of any future planning application, or change to the statutory or policy planning framework, however where changes are perceived to be imminent, we will advise you accordingly.
 - Where significant new information comes to light during the course of a planning application that was not considered at pre- application stage, the Planning Officer will alert the applicant to this and seek additional information if appropriate.
 - Development carried out on site without the benefit of planning permission (where it is required) is at risk of enforcement action and applicants and their representatives should be fully aware of this and be mindful of it when considering their position and future options.
 - Only under very exceptional circumstances will a refund or part refund be provided.
 - Free and independent professional advice on the planning process, and assistance with planning matters, may be available to you, depending on your circumstances. For further information, contact the local branch of Planning Aid through www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/

Other charges

In addition to the charges set out, Worcestershire County Council Highways also charge for pre-application advice.

Payment must be sent to Worcestershire County Council Economy and Infrastructure Directorate.

Please contact Karen Hancett on 01905 846817 or email khanchett@worcestershire.gov.uk for more information.

The table below sets out the fees Worcestershire County Council charges for pre-application advice by proposed development type.

Residential development	Development site area	Proposed gross floor area (measured in metres squared)	Cost of highway advice	Fee for additional meetings, (per meeting)
Householder	No data	No data	No charge	No charge
1 to 9 dwellings	Less than 1ha	Less than 1,000	No charge	No charge
10 to 49 dwellings	1 to 1.25ha	1,000 to 2,499	£450	£250
50 to 199 dwellings	1.26 to 2ha	2,500 to 9,999	£850	£325
200 or more dwellings	More than 2ha	10,000 or more	£1,255	£450