

DRAFT

**Planning
Services**

**Pre Application
Advice Charges
2007/8**

Epping Forest District Council

PLANNING SERVICES

Why seek pre-application advice?

It has long been recognised that it is good practice to seek advice about planning proposals from Planning Officers before submitting a planning application. This may involve meeting with us and talking about schemes or may just involve sending material to us for comment. This can help to overcome potential difficulties and to focus on the important planning considerations. It can also help to ensure that all the necessary documents and information are submitted with the application when the time comes.

It is also good practice to take your own professional advice in drawing up a scheme. Those regularly submitting applications to us, or who have successfully submitted similar schemes elsewhere, will already have their experience and expertise that can be used to put forward schemes which have the best prospect of gaining all relevant permissions or consents. Spending time and effort in preparation of a scheme should assist us all to secure the best quality development and to process the application quickly.

Planning Services has provided such meetings on schemes of all sizes for many years and has done this free of charge. **However, from 1 October 2007 we are introducing a fee for providing pre-application advice on 'major' schemes.**

In accordance with Government initiatives to make more information and services available electronically, we have provided much more information on line at www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk . We are continuing to provide ever more information and documents on our website, and to give access to this information free of charge and at virtually all hours. Examples include:

- Our Local Plan with all planning policies.
- Advice about when planning permission is needed.
- Information about the planning history of sites.
- Real time information about the process of current applications.

The Details of the Scheme

Charges for pre application advice relates to Major development only, as defined by the Government, i.e.:

- ***a scheme on any site of over 1 hectare,***
- ***a residential scheme on any site over 0.5 hectares,***
- ***a residential scheme providing 10 or more dwelling units, or***
- ***a commercial scheme of over 1000 square metres floorspace.***

Our charge for 2007/2008 financial year is £1,500 plus VAT. Your payment must be made by cheque, electronic funds transfer or bankers draft, payable to Epping Forest District Council, and we need to be satisfied that cheques have cleared before we have a meeting or provide a written response.

To arrange advice under this scheme please contact either a relevant professional officer or (DETAILS)

We will determine which officers from Planning and other service areas or organisations would sensibly deal with your enquiry and be involved in any meeting. We will listen to your views on this but the ultimate decision must be ours. A meeting will generally be held in the Civic Offices unless there are good reasons for meeting elsewhere.

Prior to the meeting we will need to be provided with sufficient information about the site and proposal to enable us to consider the essential nature of the scheme and obtain the preliminary views of other technical parties. We will need sufficient time prior to a meeting to reach a preliminary view, but we will aim to hold a meeting, if you desire one, as quickly as possible once the requirements set out here have been met.

What will the advice cover and what might the meeting consider? Examples include an assessment of:

- The planning history of the site.
- Constraints that impact upon the site: listed buildings, conservation areas, flood risk, national or local designations, etc.
- Government advice.
- Development Plan policies that are relevant.
- Design, including Building Control requirements, in particular concerning sustainable construction and energy issues.
- Amenity impacts.
- Obligations that are likely: for example, provision of infrastructure, affordable housing or contributions to service provision.
- Practical measures that may be necessary to develop; for example dealing with possible contamination.
- Process or timetabling issues.

We will provide a written summary of the advice and this will be given in good faith. However, it must be understood that the assessment can never be quite the same as that which will occur with the formal application, in particular because the views of neighbours, local councils and District Councillors will not have been sought at this stage.

The advice given is not intended to, nor does it in any way, amount to a guarantee that an application will result in a particular decision and does not bind the Council in any way.

The decision making power continues to rest with the relevant Council Committee and not officers.

Use of this scheme does not affect your right to submit any application or to pursue an application to appeal.