



# PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE ON PLANNING PROPOSALS

Planning  
Civic Offices  
Bridge Street  
Reading  
RG1 2LU

Tel: 0118 9373787

Email: [plgadmin@reading.gov.uk](mailto:plgadmin@reading.gov.uk)

Website: [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)

# Pre-application advice on planning proposals

## Guidance for prospective applicants

The Council will provide limited advice on sources of information, planning legislation and development plan policy over the phone without charge. This should be sufficient in most cases to guide prospective applicants in the right direction for submitting planning applications, particularly if they are also seeking help from a planning consultant.

## INTRODUCTION

The Council introduced a fee based pre-application planning advice service in 2008. It has proved to be beneficial to both customers and the Council in enabling planning applications to be submitted with a good chance of approval within target dates set by the government.

Having reviewed the service and the cost of providing it, the Council has decided that it is reasonable to recover some of the costs of providing detailed policy or design advice for householders, small businesses and community uses. This will also apply to advice on works to trees, listed buildings and conservation area and telecommunication equipment enquiries as part of a new Level 1 service.

In addition it has been decided to move to a standard fixed fee service for larger schemes as part of a new Level 2 service, which should be simpler for customers and officers to use.

A Level 3 service will still be provided but will only apply to very major schemes or exceptionally complex cases where the fee will be agreed by negotiation.

**Note:** The Council will charge separately for appraisals of viability assessments and for appraisals of other specialist studies (e.g. ground condition, contaminated land, retail, sunlight, daylight, wind studies, etc.) that are proposed to be submitted with any planning application to justify a decision that is not in accordance with the Council's policies (see below). The Council will also charge separately for such studies where they are submitted as part of planning applications and have not been considered as part of the pre-application process.

### Level 1 response

This level of advice is available for householders, small businesses or community groups (and their agents) seeking advice on all house extensions and business or community uses where the floor area involved is less than 200 square meters and broad advice on the principle of a proposal has already been obtained (from available sources of information) but guidance on matters of detail (such as design, parking, policy exceptions etc) is required, this also applies to Works to a Tree Subject to a TPO and in a Conservation Area. These may involve officers in carrying out site assessments, history searches and internal consultations to provide a comprehensive written response. A meeting is not normally included but if one is requested by the applicant an additional fee is required.

The service standard for a written response is 4 weeks unless otherwise agreed by the pre-applicant.

*The Council's level 1 response could comprise:*

- (a) an indication of whether the proposal is likely to be acceptable in policy terms;
- (b) detailed comment on any amenity or design considerations;
- (c) detailed comment on other constraints;
- (d) advice following response to consultations;
- (e) worked-up information on any section 106 planning obligations;
- (f) detailed validation requirements (by reference to Validation Checklist\*);
- (g) where it relates to tree works, whether this is likely to be acceptable

## Level 2 response

This level is aimed at larger commercial customers seeking advice on new residential development or conversions or new business premises where the floor area involved is in excess of 200 square meters. The work involved by officers will be similar to level 1 enquiries but this level includes an external consultation as necessary. One meeting only is included.

*The Council's level 2 response could comprise:*

- (a) an indication of whether the proposal is likely to be acceptable in policy terms;
- (b) detailed comment on any amenity or design constraints;
- (c) detailed comment on other constraints;
- (d) advice following response to consultations;
- (e) worked-up information on section 106 planning obligations;
- (f) detailed validation requirements (by reference to Validation Checklist\*).

The service standard for a written response is 5 weeks unless otherwise agreed by the pre-applicant.

## Level 3 response

This is a collaborative and project management approach, suitable only for complex, large scale and major proposals (which we define as being in excess of 1000 square meters in area or with 20 dwellings or more). Enquiries for development of this scale require detailed and evolving pre-application discussion over several or many months. An initial inception or scoping meeting will lead to an agreed project plan including timescales, key milestones and scheduled meetings. Response times and fee required would be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

## Follow-up Advice

It may be that following a "first tranche" response that a proposer may follow up with a request for further comment on modifications to the proposal stemming from the advice provided. There are charges for such follow-up advice.

## Viability and Viability Assessments Advice

Viability has now become central to planning policy and the determination of planning applications. The Council has subjected relevant Local Plan Policies and CIL Charging Schedule to extensive viability assessment and in most circumstances the expectation is that policies can be met in full. It is open, however, for an applicant to make a case on viability grounds that the full policy requirement cannot be met. For such a case to be assessed, the application must be accompanied by the submission of a full viability appraisal (following the guidance in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing). This should be agreed as far as possible as part of the pre-application process, in particular the various prices, costs and other information and inputs set out in Appendix 5 of the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing. Separate charges will be made specifically for the time of the Council's Asset and Development Manager or independent consultants in appraising and negotiating on the viability assessment. These charges are shown within the list of charges set out at the end of this form. The Council will not negotiate on viability assessments if they are submitted as part of an application for which no pre-application appraisal and negotiation has taken place unless these separate charges are paid. The council has limited resources for such work and it may have to outsource the work to external consultants. In these cases, the applicant will be advised of, and expected to pay, the costs of the external consultants.

## Charges

The scale of charges for pre-application advice is set out in the table at the back of this leaflet and all are subject to VAT.

## Completing the Form

To help us provide an effective pre-application service for level 1 and 2 enquiries, the attached questionnaire should be completed and returned, together with the requisite fee. Your request for advice will not be progressed until the correct fee has been paid. The completed questionnaire should be returned with 2 copies of any information or plans (only 1 copy required for tree works) you wish to submit.

For Level 3 enquiries you should contact the Area Manager to arrange an initial scoping meeting, which will include discussion on an appropriate fee for the service. You can use the attached questionnaire for this if it helps.

### "Without Prejudice" Advice

Whilst the Council's officers will endeavor to ensure that pre-application advice given is robust, please note that this advice given is on a "without prejudice" basis and cannot preempt consideration of a formal application. Also, the Council may change its views on the merits of a proposal if there is a change in circumstances after pre-application advice has been given, such as a change in planning policy or case law.

### Validation Checklist

Legislation has been introduced concerning certain basic documents and information which must accompany an application for planning permission before it can be validated, and thereafter processed. The Council has accordingly published a "Validation Checklist" that is available on the Council's website and this indicates the information required for an application to be validated. The Checklist is in two parts.

Part One is a list of national requirements that must be provided before an application can be validated.

Part Two is a local list that is currently not mandatory.

However, you are strongly advised to refer to the local list, so that you can make yourself aware of other information requirements that are necessary for the Council to be able to deal with various aspects of your application. The Council is required to make decisions on validated applications within timescales set by government, and you risk refusal if all the information the Council requires has not been submitted at the outset. In responding to requests for pre-application advice, the Council will draw attention to items from the checklist that will be required for full consideration and determination of the application.

Your attention is also drawn to the Council's leaflet "Community Involvement and Planning Applications" (available on the web site) and Planning Portal - Online Application Guidance Note.

### Householder Permitted Development Enquiries:

The Council no longer provides a written response for enquires regarding permitted development (i.e. telling you if you need planning permission for your proposal). Please visit the Planning Portal website (<https://www.planningportal.co.uk>) and view the "Do you need permission" section. Alternatively you could apply for a Lawful Development Certificate for Proposed Development, which lawfully confirms whether your proposal is permitted development or whether it requires planning permission. The appropriate forms can be downloaded from the same Planning Portal website.

**The Council wishes to make clear that all pre-application discussions will be treated in confidence. However where requests for information about pre-application discussions are received under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), the Council will ask the applicant for pre-application advice to confirm whether they consent to the disclosure of the information, and if not why in their view it is in the public interest not to disclose the information. The Council will then consider whether it is not in the public interest to disclose the information.**

# Pre-Application enquiry form

**Level 1** - For enquiries on house extensions, extensions to or changes of use for businesses, commercial or community uses where the floor area in question is less than 200 sq m.

This Level of advice should also be requested for advice on proposals for Advertisements, works to listed building or works in conservation areas, landscaping advice, works to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders or in a Conservation Area and telecommunication equipment.

Level 1 enquiries do not normally require a meeting but if this is requested by you an additional fee of £82.50 plus VAT will be payable.

We will try to respond to this request within 4 weeks unless a later date is agreed with you.

**Level 2** - For enquiries about extensions to businesses, commercial or community uses where the floor area in question is more than 200 square meters and for proposals for new residential development including conversions to residential use.

Level 2 enquiries include the option of one meeting as part of the service. Any additional meetings requested by you will require a further fee of £110 plus vat to be paid.

We will try to respond to this enquiry within 5 weeks unless a later date is agreed with you.

**Level 3** - This form can be used when approaching the Council with your enquiry on a more major or complex proposal to introduce it to us and to arrange an initial scoping meeting.

**Address of site:**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Description of proposed development:** If a non-household extension enquiry, please indicate the floor area involved. In all cases provide a location & site plan.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Name, address, telephone and email address of agent/person making this enquiry.**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Name of prospective developer/organisation if applicable.

.....  
.....  
.....

Type of formal application proposed, e.g. Full, Outline, Listed Building, Approval of reserved matters, details required by a planning condition etc.

.....  
.....  
.....

Details & dates of any previous relevant applications or pre-application discussions.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

List of any documents, photographs or plans submitted with this enquiry.  
If possible, include a statement justifying your proposals with reference to national & local planning policies & guidance. **PLEASE PROVIDE 2 COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS AND PLANS** (only 1 copy required for tree works)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Details of any consultations you have done or propose to carry out with statutory and non-statutory consultees at pre-application stage.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

When do you anticipate submitting a formal application?

.....  
.....

PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON SEPARATE SHEETS

Fee to be submitted including VAT: £  
Pay-on-line: <http://www.reading.gov.uk> select 'Pay' in Council section, select 'Planning' option & select Pre-Application advice from first drop down option. Continue to complete payment.

Please return completed form to: Planning, First Floor North Rear, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU or email: [plqadmin@reading.gov.uk](mailto:plqadmin@reading.gov.uk)

## Pre- application fees from 1 October 2018

LEVELS OF PRE-PLANNING APPLICATION ADVICE		FIXED FEES	MEETINGS & FOLLOW UP	TARGET FOR RESPONSE IN WRITING
<b>LEVEL 1</b> Householders: advice on house extensions.		£143.33 + VAT = £172	£82.50 + VAT = £99	4 weeks
Small businesses and developers: advice on building works and change of use where the floor area involved is up to 200 sq m.		£145 + VAT = £174	£85 + VAT = £102	
Proposals for Community Uses - (Free for up to 200 sq m).		£145 + VAT = £174	£85 + VAT = £102	
Advertisements.		£250 + VAT = £300	£85 + VAT = £102	
Telecommunication installations.		£145 + VAT = £174	£85 + VAT = £102	
Listed building consent		£145 + VAT = £174	£85 + VAT = £102	
Trees and landscaping.		£145 + VAT = £174	£85 + VAT = £102	
Works to trees covered by Tree Preservation Order or in a Conservation area.		£145 + VAT = £174	£85 + VAT = £102	
<b>LEVEL 2</b> Business, commercial or other development of 201 sq m to 1,000 sq m or up to 19 dwellings.	201 - 499sqm	£350 + VAT = £420	One meeting included in fee. Additional meetings or follow up advice charged at £110 + VAT per hour = £132 per hour.	5 weeks
	500 - 1,000sqm.	£660 + VAT = £792		
	1-3 dwellings	£350 + VAT = £420		
	4-9 dwellings	£500 + VAT = £600		
	10-15 dwellings	£825 + VAT = £990		
	16-19 dwellings	£1000 + VAT = £1200		
<b>LEVEL 3</b> Development > 1,001 sq m or 20+ dwellings or other proposals.		Introductory meeting fee of £220 + VAT = £264 - thereafter by negotiation	By Negotiation	By Negotiation

**Viability Charges:** these are base costs for work undertaken to assess, and negotiate, submitted viability appraisals. The Council reserves the right to charge additional fees at a fixed hourly rate where matters get particularly complicated or overly time consuming.

Proposals	Initial Fixed Fees
1 unit	£1,500
1-4 units	£2,500
5-9 units	£4,000
10-14 units	£5,000
15-29 units	£8,000
30+ units	£10,000
Strategic/multiphase schemes	£15,000
If deferred to external consultants then their cost will be advised at the time of outsourcing.	

All pre-application charges are subject to VAT

**If you need help to fill in or understand this planning document or would like this to be made available in large print, braille or audio format then please call 0118 9373787**

如果您需要帮助填写或了解这份计划文件, 或需要相应的大体字, 盲文, 或声音格式文件, 请拨打电话 0800 626540.

“यदि आपको इस योजना दस्तावेज़ (प्लैनिंग डॉक्यूमेंट) को भरने या समझने के लिए सहायता की आवश्यकता है या आप चाहते हैं कि यह आपको बड़ी छपाई, नेत्रहीनों के लिए प्रयोग की जाने वाली लिपि या ऑडीओ (सुनने वाली) टेप के रूप में उपलब्ध कराया जाए तब कृपया 0800 626540 पर फ़ोन करें”

Osoby potrzebujące pomocy w zrozumieniu lub wypełnieniu niniejszego dokumentu bądź ragnące uzyskać kopię dokumentu wydrukowaną dużą czcionką, alfabetem Braille'a lub zapisaną w formacie audio, proszone są o kontakt telefoniczny pod numerem 0800 626540.

Caso precise de ajuda para preencher ou entender este documento de planeamento, ou prefira tê-lo disponível em formato de letra grande, braile ou áudio, por favor ligue para 0800 626540.

“ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ (ਪਲੈਨਿੰਗ ਡੋਕੂਮੈਂਟ) ਨੂੰ ਭਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ, ਨੇਤ੍ਰਹੀਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਵਰਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਲਿਪੀ ਜਾਂ ਔਡੀਓ (ਸੁਣੀ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ) ਟੇਪ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0800 626540 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ”

اگر آپ کو پلاننگ کی اس دستاویز کو پُر کرنے یا اسے سمجھنے کے سلسلے میں مدد درکار ہو یا آپ چاہتے ہوں کہ اس بڑی طباعت، بریل یا آڈیو کی شکل میں تیار کیا جائے تو براہ مہربانی 0800 626 540 پر ٹیلیفون کریں۔

For general advice/information about planning:

<https://www.planningportal.co.uk>

<http://www.reading.gov.uk> 'Planning' section

Or write to:

Planning, Reading Borough Council,  
Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU

Email: [plgadmin@reading.gov.uk](mailto:plgadmin@reading.gov.uk)