

Planning Advice Note Number 6 – Preliminary Enquiries

Why Seek Advice?

You may be after confirmation whether you need planning permission or not. Alternatively, you may need advice before you submit your planning application to see if what you want to do is acceptable. We operate a local planning advice scheme. This leaflet will explain what you need to do to submit an enquiry and the cost ¹.

The purpose is to encourage quality development. This service can reduce uncertainty and improve the quality of your planning application. This may help us to decide your application quicker as you will be aware of potential issues and be told what information will be required. If your proposal is unacceptable, this could provide you with the opportunity to amend your plans or even save you the cost of submitting an application for development that will be refused.

What will you need to do?

Enquiries have to be in writing/email. You can use a form we can send you or submit online via <https://developmentservices.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=submitPreApplication>. You must include...

- Details of the site address and property.
- Sketch plans of what you want to do. These do not have to be prepared by an architect at this stage but they must be sufficiently accurate for an officer to interpret them. They should be to scale or have all dimensions marked.
- The preliminary advice fee paid in full.

¹ This service is separate from the statutory pre-application service that the Council is obliged to provide under The Town & Country Planning (Pre-Application Services)(Wales) Regulations 2016.

What we will do

On receipt of the enquiry, we will check that we have the necessary information. The enquiry will then be allocated to a case officer. If we need more information, we will contact you. The case officer will research our records to establish the planning history and if necessary visit the site. Our written response to you will contain the following:

1. Site history
2. Policies and guidance relevant to your case.
3. Identify constraints e.g. access, trees, flood risk.
4. If appropriate, likely reports and information required for a planning application e.g. ecology studies.
5. Statutory designations e.g. listed building.
6. Any likely s106 planning obligation requirements
7. The planning case officer's professional view on the acceptability of your proposal. This will give you an indication of the likely outcome of a future planning application.

Our response will provide planning guidance only. If you require input from other Council departments such as Highways, Ecology or Building Control, you must contact them direct.

Response Times

We will make every effort to respond to your enquiry as soon as possible. We aim to deal with all enquiries up to and including Level 4 in 28 days.

Level 5, 6 and 7 enquiries may take longer but we will aim to respond in 40 days.

Meetings

Where a meeting is requested, a senior officer will decide whether a meeting is appropriate. If so, we will arrange the meeting as quickly as possible. A meeting will not be convened unless the required background information is submitted in advance of the meeting. Meetings may be held at the Council Offices or on site.

Should a venue be outside the Borough, the fee may be increased to cover travelling expenses.

Complaints and Refunds

Any complaints about the preliminary advice service must be directed to the Service Manager at the contact details at the bottom of page 2 of this leaflet.

On occasion it is not possible to meet the targets set for a response. In this case, you will be advised of any delay. Fees are not returnable in such circumstances. Fees will only be refunded (part or whole) where in the opinion of the Service Manager the service provided falls short of the high standards we set ourselves.

Disclaimer

Any view expressed at the preliminary stage is not binding on the Council. A binding decision of the Council can only be made after consultation with local residents, statutory and other consultees and interested parties as part of a planning application.

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Type of Development	Written Advice	Meeting with follow up written advice
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 1 Enquiry – Compliance and Information</u></p> <p>Confirmation that planning conditions or s106 obligations have been discharged and/or that development has been completed in accordance with the planning permission (per enquiry)</p>	<p>Householder £70</p> <p>Single house £140</p> <p>All other compliance checks charged at 30% of the original planning app fee</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 2 Enquiry - Householder</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alterations, extension, conservatory or loft conversion • Walls and fences, Garages, sheds and other curtilage buildings, driveways • Operate a business from home • Micro generation for heat or electricity • Extend garden / curtilage 	£30	£70
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 3 Enquiry – Minor Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted development enquiry (non householder) £70 • Change of Use (any) £70 • Alterations to exterior of commercial or retail or industrial premises (inc solar panels) £60 • Advertisements £70 • Single dwelling – new build £140 • Residential Development New (change of use or new build) to residential creating 2 - 5 units or site area less than 1 hectare £280 • Residential development (change of use or new build) 6-9 units or site area less than 1 hectare £420 		£140 per 1 hour meeting
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 4 Enquiry – Business Commercial Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non residential 999sqm or less floorspace or site area less than 0.99ha. 	£280	£560
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 5 Enquiry – Major Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential development where the number of units is unknown and site area is more than 0.5 hectare • Residential 10-23 units • Development with a site area of 1ha+ • Provision of a building(s) with a floorspace of 1000sqm+ • Waste and Minerals development 	£1000	£1500
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 6 Enquiry - Energy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy generation under 10MW 		£1500

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy generation over 10MW 	<p>£100 plus consultancy fees incurred by LPA</p> <p>£1500 plus consultancy fees incurred by LPA</p>	<p>Extra £100 per additional meeting</p> <p>£2000 Extra £100 per additional meeting</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 7 Enquiry – Large Major</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential development 24+ 	£1500	£2000 Extra £100 per additional meeting
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Level 8 Enquiry – Listed Buildings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation whether LBC required • Repairs to Listed Building advice • Listed Building advice where works require LBC 	<p>£30</p> <p>£70</p> <p>£250</p>	<p>£70</p> <p>£100</p> <p>£350</p>

All fees include VAT. Payment must be made in full before an enquiry is registered. Other development not specified in this schedule – fee at discretion of Service Manager.

Exemptions from Fee:

Works to existing house to provide access or improve the quality of life for a disabled occupant.

Works for and being carried out by the County Borough, Town or Community Council

Minor non-profit works for small community organisations for the benefit of the local population (case office discretion)

Note: Wherever practicable, meetings will be held via Microsoft team

Fees Updated 3rd March 2024