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**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

**PRE-PLANNING APPLICATION
ADVICE SERVICE**

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

April 2024

Development Management Services

Pre-Application Service Guidance Notes

The Pre-Application Service

Purpose of the note

This guidance note is to help applicants understand the procedures for using our Pre-Application Service for Planning and related applications including Listed Building Applications.

What are pre-application discussions?

These are discussions between a prospective applicant and the Local Planning Authority to help understand the application process in relation to a particular proposal.

What are the benefits of having pre-application discussions?

Pre-application discussions are a discretionary service but due to the benefits of the discussions we encourage prospective applicants to discuss their development proposals with us at the earliest opportunity.

Benefits include: -

- Detailed discussions about your proposal.
- Identify the relevant current and emerging planning policies
- Identifying potential issues early on and provide help on how to resolve them.
- Suggestions to improve the proposal.
- A written response of all discussions.
- Establishing the information required when submitting an application in order to avoid incomplete applications
- To start to build and establish a relationship with the planning officers and other council officers who will be involved in deciding your application.
- Improving consistency, certainty and speed for users of the planning system
- Reducing the number of refusals
- Reducing the number of appeals
- Reducing the number of pre-commencement conditions

What won't pre-application advice do?

It cannot deliver a guaranteed outcome, i.e. a guaranteed planning permission or a formal view of planning committee. This is because: -

- Applications are subject to a wider consultation process than a pre-application enquiry and issues may come to light at a later date.
- 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
- 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 considerations, in arriving at their decision

Is there a charge for the service?

There is a charge for the pre-application service. The cost will depend on the level and type of service requested. The charges relate to the amount of officer time that dealing with an enquiry will take.

Please note that your request for advice will not be processed without payment being received. If you request further advice after you have received your written response and we have closed the case, this will be chargeable.

For further information on charges please refer to the Charging Schedule (available via the website).

Service Level Options – An Overview

There are 2 types of service:-

Statutory Pre-application Service . This is the basic level of service that Local Authorities MUST provide as legislated by Welsh Government. It will be a desk top assessment based on a minimum level of information. The Authority will not enter in to any discussions regarding your proposal. You will be provided with a written response that will include; relevant planning history and planning policies you should consider. Any other planning guidance and material considerations and an initial view on the proposal

Monmouthshire Pre-application Service. This is a bespoke service and designed by asking our customers what mattered to them. It will provide all the elements of the statutory service, along with an opportunity for you to discuss options and ideas with the Development Management Officer as well as suggestions to help improve the proposal. If relevant, a Building Control Officer will also attend the meeting (free of charge) to advise on the relevant Building Regulation permissions required and any other considerations. The written response will include all details of the discussions, the relevant policies, history along with details of what is needed to be submitted with the planning application.

- **Level 1 – Householder**
 - The enlargement, improvement or alteration of an existing dwelling house within garden curtilage. Eg: Extension, enclosures, garden building but NOT a Listed Building
 - Advertisements
- **Level 2 Minor Developments**
 - 1-9 residential units or where a residential site area < 0.5 hectare.
 - Non Residential, Change of Use or Mixed use where gross floor space <1000 sqm or site area < 0.5 hectares
 - NOT a listed building
- **Listed Buildings**
 - Includes alterations to the Listed Building and/or any structures that are considered to be within the curtilage and offered statutory protection.
- **Level 3 Major Development**
 - 10-24 residential units or where a residential site area ≥ 0.5 but <1.0 hectare.
 - Non Residential, Change of Use or Mixed use where gross floor space ≥ 1000 but <2000 sqm or site area ≥ 0.5 but <1.0 hectare
- **Level 4 Large Major Development**
 - 25 or more residential units or where a residential site ≥ 1.0 hectare.
 - Non Residential, Change of Use or Mixed use where gross floor space ≥ 2000 sqm or site area ≥ 1.0 hectare.

For more detailed information on the service level options including fees see the Charging Schedule.
How to request Pre-application Advice.

You can request this service by completing the Pre-Application Advice Request form (available via the website). Simply decide on the type and level of service you need and send the completed form to us, along with the relevant fee and a site location plan.

Payment can be made by cheque (made payable to ‘Monmouthshire County Council’), by card over the telephone on: 01633 644355 or online at [Online Payments - Monmouthshire \(civicaepay.co.uk\)](https://www.civicaepay.co.uk) and select Services

Service Standards – Statutory and Bespoke

1. Registration & Acknowledgement – on receipt of your enquiry form we will: -

- Check that sufficient information has been provided to enable us to respond to your enquiry appropriately.
- Acknowledge receipt of your enquiry and confirm the fee paid within 3 working days.
- Issue your enquiry to a Development Management officer who will become your case officer.

2. Enquiry/Application Review - The case officer will: -

- a. Assess the enquiry/type of development and confirm that the appropriate level of advice has been requested. In the case that you have not provided the correct fee or if we advise an alternative level of service we will discuss this with you before undertaking any further work.
- b. Research and assess your enquiry before contacting you to discuss your proposal in person and to arrange a virtual or site meeting (dependant on the fee paid) convenient to you and the case officer. This will include any additional Authority experts if appropriate.
- c. Advise on further information that would be beneficial in helping to respond to your enquiry i.e. Sketch proposals of layout and elevations.
- d. Consult (where requested) with other MCC services (e.g. Highways) for their input/opinion if deemed critical to your proposal.

If you have selected the statutory service only point a) will be undertaken

3. Response Times - We will aim to meet the following timescales: -

- Statutory Service – 21 days unless an extension of time is agreed with all parties
- Bespoke Service - **see** below. In particularly complex cases or in unforeseen circumstances more time may be necessary and we will discuss and agree this with you at the earliest possible opportunity.

Level of Service	(Working days from receipt of written enquiry/application)			
	Registration/ Acknowledge ment within	Enquiry/Applicatio n Review within	Meeting to be arranged (not held) within	Written Response within (working days after meeting)
Level 1	3	10	15	5
Level 2& LB	3	10	15	10
Level 3	3	10	15	10
Level 4	3	10	15	10

Written Advice Response – What will it include: -

Statutory

- Summary of site history
- Relevant planning policy and Supplementary Guidance
- Other material considerations
- An initial view on the proposal
- Section 106 and CIL scope and indicative amount if applicable

Bespoke

- Summary of what we understand your proposal to be
- Summary of our advice including site history, planning policy and site constraints, requirements and opportunities (e.g. conservation orders, listed building, public footpaths etc)
- Summary of all issues discussed at the meeting and material considerations
- The planning policies you need to be aware of and any Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Our initial views about the proposal
- Recommendations and advice on how to improve your proposal , if required
- Section 106 and indicative amount if applicable
- Contact details of who you may need to contact to further discuss your proposal prior to submission
- The information you will need to submit with an application

What will happen if you submit an application based on this advice? The next stage: -

- The Council will seek to ensure that the same case officer will process the application
- The Council will ensure that any pre-application advice is carefully considered in reaching a recommendation on an application

Building Regulations

If you are carrying out any kind of building works it is likely that you will require Building Regulations. If you are unsure or would like further advice regarding building regulations please contact **Monmouthshire Building Control Services** on: **01633 644833** or email buildingcontrol@monmouthshire.gov.uk

The Development Management Officer will notify the Building Control Team of your enquiry and proposed development scheme and where appropriate a Building Surveyor may accompany the Development Management Officer at your meeting.

Confidentiality – MCC may have to: -

- Disclose information it holds if requested for under the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations. You must advise us of any information that you provide is confidential or commercially sensitive and explain why. You may be asked to complete a commercial prejudice form.

Disclaimer

Any views or opinions expressed are given in good faith, without prejudice to the consideration of a formal application. Pre-application cannot bind the Local Planning Authority to a particular outcome. Any formal decision of the LPA can only be made after the Council has consulted local people, statutory consultees and any other interested parties. The decision will be based on all of

the information available at the time. You should therefore be aware that the officers cannot guarantee the final formal decision that will be made on an application.

How you can contact us

If you have any questions regarding this document please contact the Development Management Department by: -

Email – planning@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Telephone – 01633 644 831

Post –
Planning Department
Monmouthshire County Council
County Hall,
Rhaydr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Further information is available via the website: www.monmouthshire.gov.uk