



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Pre-Application Advice Charter

1 April 2025
Version 7

Darlington Council - Pre- Application Charges Charter

Darlington Borough Council is committed to providing an efficient and customer-focused pre-application advice service which helps applicants to deliver high quality development. Open and constructive pre-application discussions are an opportunity for the Council and developers to work together to achieve developments that deliver benefits to the community and the economy. This can save time and cost.

The benefits of pre-application advice:-

- It gives an opportunity to understand how our policy will be applied to the development and can advise what is required in order for a development to be determined favourably subject to a formal application and the results of public consultation. It can also indicate that a proposal has little or no realistic chance of success, so saving considerable time and money.
- It may lead to a reduction in time spent in engaging professional advisers in working up the proposals in more detail as it can identify issues before an application is submitted.
- It can help prevent costly and time-consuming amendments to schemes at a later date.
- It can identify at an early stage whether any specialist advice is needed, e.g. with regard to listed buildings, trees, flood risk, highways etc.
- It can provide opportunities to discuss details of the proposal such as its design and the materials to be used.
- It can give an opportunity to meet with all relevant council officers who may need to discuss your application where necessary.
- It can provide assistance on what you need to provide in order to ensure compliance with the planning application validation process and potentially relevant Section 106 requirements.
- It can provide information in relation to our decision-making procedures.

How to obtain pre-application advice

In order that we can manage the process enquiries should be submitted on one of the following forms:-

- A – Major development enquiries.
- B – Minor / Other development enquiries.
- C – Householder enquiries.

You must also enclose the appropriate fee and documents as described on the information checklist (see pages 4 and 6 of this document).

On receipt of your enquiry, it will be acknowledged and given a reference number. The acknowledgement letter will inform of the date by which you can expect to receive a response and the name and contact details of the planning case officer who will be dealing with your enquiry.

Pre-application advice forms can be obtained from the Council's website at the following address:

www.darlington.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-application-and-permission/pre-application-service

Forms are also available from the Customer Services Centre at the Town Hall, Darlington

The Scheme of Charges

A scheme of charges for this advice is set out in the following schedule which is inclusive of VAT at 20%.

The charges have been set at a level to help recover the cost of the service and may be subject to review.

Summary of the three main services and their scope is shown below:-

	Major proposals	Minor / Other proposals	Householder
Planning history search	Yes	Yes	No
Development Plan context	Yes	Yes	No
Officer opinion as to acceptability	Yes	Yes	Yes for extra service
Views of internal consultees	Yes	Yes	Yes for extra service
Views of external consultees	Where possible but will say where not possible	Where possible but will say where not possible	N/A
Advice on pre-app. community consultation	Yes	N/A	N/A
Advice on validation requirements	Yes	Yes	Yes for extra service
EIA screening opinion	Yes	Yes – if applicable	N/A
Heads of terms for s.106 agreement	Yes	Yes – if applicable	N/A
Ongoing development team approach	Yes	N/A	N/A
Target timescales *	6 weeks	6 weeks	6 weeks

* We aim to respond to Pre-Application enquiries in 6 weeks for development proposals. Where we anticipate this will be longer, we will let you know as early as we can in the process.

Information requirements

In order to provide a quality service, the Council will require the following minimum level of information to be submitted before an enquiry can be registered and thereafter assessed.

Major proposals	Minor / Other proposals	Householder
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter explaining details of proposals. • Location (OS) plan to identify site. • An indicative site layout plan • Photographs to help illustrate the site if possible. • Drawings showing the layout, height and scale of the development (if applicable) • Draft design and access statement / or Draft Planning Statement (sufficient to enable assessment to be made of the key planning issues) • Details of Sustainable Drainage proposals including layout of system; topography; construction and connection; landscaping and planting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter explaining details of proposals. • Location (OS) plan to identify site. • Photographs to help illustrate the site if possible. • Drawings showing the layout, height and scale of the development (if applicable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Council's householder enquiry form • Location (OS) plan to identify site – (Red Line Boundary) • Block Plan / Sketch Elevations of the proposal

Please note these are minimum requirements to validate an enquiry and the submission of further information, where available, is welcomed.

Disclaimer

The written advice given is without prejudice to the Council's position in determination of any future application and whilst given in good faith, may not reflect the view of the Local Planning Authority.

The advice may change in the light of consultation responses and advice that cannot be anticipated at this stage.

Information Governance

The advice given is not placed within the public domain. However, should specific requests be made by a third party to view the response under the Freedom of Information provisions, information may be released under these circumstances, subject to sensitive or confidential information being redacted.

What if things go wrong?

The Local Planning Authority is committed to providing an effective and efficient pre-application planning service.

However, despite best endeavours, there will inevitably be occasions when customers are dissatisfied with the level of service provided. In such cases a customer will be invited to initially discuss their concerns with the Principal Planning Officer. If still not satisfied, customers will be invited to refer the matter to the Head of Service. In cases where the level of advice offered has plainly failed to meet the standards of the service set out in this policy, the Head of Service will give consideration to a refund of any fees paid.

Scale of fees (All charges include VAT at 20%)

Development Type		Cost of Service
Code	Largescale Major Developments	
1	Dwellings (200 or more) (4 ha or more)	£2500 for written response, including up to 2 meetings.
2	Offices / R & D / light industry (>10,000sq metres or >2ha)	
3	General Industry/storage/warehousing (>10,000sq metres or >2ha)	
4	Retail distribution and servicing (>10,000sq metres or >2ha)	
5	Gypsy and Traveller pitches (>10,000sq metres or >2ha)	
6	All other largescale major developments (>10,000sq metres or >2ha)	
	Small Scale Major Developments	
7	Dwellings (10 - 199) (0.5 ha and less than 4 ha)	£800 for written response, including up to 2 meetings.
8	Offices/ R & D / light industry (1,000sq metres - 9,999 sq metres)	
9	General Industry/storage/Warehousing (1,000sq metres - 9,999 sq metres)	
10	Retail distribution and servicing (1,000sq metres - 9,999 sq metres)	
11	Gypsy and Traveller pitches (1,000sq metres - 9,999 sq metres)	
12	All other small major developments (1,000sq metres - 9,999 sq metres)	
	Minor Developments	
13	Dwellings (1-9) (Less than 0.5 ha)	£400 for written response to include a meeting if necessary
14	Offices / R& D / light industry (< 1000 or 1ha)	
15	General Industry/storage/warehousing (< 1000 or 1ha)	
16	Retail distribution and servicing (< 1000 or 1ha)	
17	Gypsy and Traveller pitches (< 1000 or 1ha)	
18	All other minor developments (< 1000 or 1ha)	
	Other Developments	
19	Minerals Processing	Based on area as above
20	Change of Use <i>Please note this does not include enquiries relating to the change of use of a building to a dwelling(s)/flat(s), the fee for which should be calculated on the number of dwellings to be created</i>	£50 for written response to include a meeting if necessary
21	Householder developments (advice on permission being granted)	£50
22	Advertisements	£25
23	Listed building consents (to alter/extend)	£50
24	Listed building consents (to demolish)	£50
26	Certificates of lawful development	Pre-application advice not appropriate
27	Telecommunication Notifications	£126
	Other charges	
	Pre-Application meeting involving Planning Committee Members	£2000

Fees will be reviewed by an agreed inflationary amount from 1st April yearly.