



## PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE CHARGES

### Guidance Note – 1 April 2014

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority welcomes and encourages discussions with a prospective developer and/or landowner before the submission of a planning application so that matters can be raised at the very early stages of the planning process to improve the overall quality of development in the National Park. This guidance note and fees also applies to the intended submission of retrospective planning applications.

Since April 2010, the Authority has operated a fee paying service for pre-application planning advice to sustain and improve current service levels and to recover the cost of the service. This latest review of the service was approved by the Authority on 21 March 2014, and became effective on 1 April 2014.

This advice note sets out what the Authority will charge for pre-application advice and what we will do as a result and the information you are required to provide.

Some pre-application planning advice will still remain free of charge (e.g. advice given at the planning surgery meetings that are currently available to members of the public for discussions relating to householder proposals) but for the remainder, a fee will apply.

The pre-application planning advice fee is in addition to the formal planning application fee, further details of which can be found via [www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk) .

**Pre-application advice is given on an informal without prejudice basis by Planning Officers based on the information known at that time. Any advice given will not be binding on the Authority in determining any future applications. However, the advice provided will give prospective developers and landowners a good understanding of the key issues that would need to be addressed in support of a subsequent planning application.**

If you require formal confirmation whether or not planning permission is required for a development, you will need to submit an application for a lawful development certificate<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A Lawful Development Certificate is a type of application which formally considers whether or not planning permission is required. Further information can be found on <http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/the-authority/planning>



## PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE CHARGES

### Guidance Note – 1 April 2014

#### WHY SEEK ADVICE?

The planning application process can be complex. There are considerable benefits in seeking advice before making an application such as:

- gaining an understanding of how our planning policies will be applied to your development.
- identification at an early stage where there is a need for specialist input, for example about listed buildings, trees, landscape, noise, transport, contaminated land, ecology or archaeology. Planning Officers will involve other specialist advice if deemed necessary and appropriate, although such an approach is only likely to be appropriate and effective for more complex schemes that generate a wide range of planning issues and potentially significant impacts. For reasons of confidentiality, please state in your correspondence if you agree to the involvement of other stakeholders (e.g. Natural Resources Wales, constituent Authorities) in the pre-application process.
- assistance in preparing proposals for formal application submission which, providing you have taken our advice fully into account, will be processed more efficiently once submitted.
- may lead to a reduction in time spent by your professional advisors in working up proposals.
- may indicate that a proposal is completely unacceptable, saving you the cost of submitting a formal application.
- ensure an application is complete and comprehensive and to a satisfactory standard, avoiding rejection at the validation stage or early refusal of permission because of inadequate or insufficient information.

#### WHAT ARE THE CHARGES?

The relevant pre-application charges are set out in Appendix I.

However, we will **NOT charge for advice in the following circumstances:**

- Alterations or extensions to single dwellings and other householder applications, for example garages/sheds/summerhouses/domestic micro-generation etc. - **except where a site visit is requested or the query is made by an agent/architect acting on behalf of a prospective applicant.** If you require a formal decision as to whether



## PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE CHARGES

### Guidance Note – 1 April 2014

development requires planning permission or not, please submit an application for a lawful development certificate.

- Listed Building Conservation advice (**urgent structural repairs only**).
- General advice on how to submit householder and minor planning applications.
- Advice to County Councils (unless the advice is sought by an agent working on behalf of the County Council), Town and Community Councils and Registered Charities.
- Advice to Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) in respect of Rural Exceptions Sites and other sites where proposals are wholly for affordable housing (e.g. sites that do not include open market dwellings) and where the RSL will retain ownership and management of the scheme.

### WHAT ADVICE WILL BE PROVIDED?

Our pre-application advice will provide you with the following:

- Relevant planning history of a site;
- Identification of relevant national and local planning policies;
- Identification of relevant planning constraints e.g. biodiversity, flood risk, land contamination, trees, archaeology etc. – please be advised that site specific constraints such as the presence of underground pipelines, utility infrastructure and legal constraints (e.g. covenants and rights of access) are the responsibility of the landowner and will not be identified by the Authority;
- Information regarding potential planning obligations and relevant contacts;
- Information regarding other possible organisations that should be contacted for their advice prior to the submission of an application, e.g. Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government Transport Department.
- Identification of the information required for a particular type of application to be considered valid;
- Informal guidance on the suggested content of an application; and,
- Informal and without prejudice written summary of views by the Planning Officer.



## PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE CHARGES

### Guidance Note – 1 April 2014

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO

All enquiries must be made in writing (by letter or by email) clearly setting out what you are seeking advice for and where and how you wish to receive that advice (see Appendix 1). As a minimum the following information must be provided:

- Full site address and location plan (1:1250 scale) with the site outlined in red;
- Description of the proposed use, nature and scale of development;
- Site history such as previous and current uses, previous planning permissions/refusals, occupancy;
- Any advice that you may have already received from the highways authority, Natural Resources Wales, Cadw etc.
- Photographs of the site;
- Sketch drawings providing details of the proposal. Floor plans for each floor of the proposed building together with at least sketch elevations that are sufficient to indicate the initial architectural approach and the materials proposed. Drawings should also show any adjacent buildings to identify the context of the scheme;
- The appropriate fee (see Appendix 1); and,
- Confirmation of whether written advice and/or a meeting are required.

More complex development proposals may also need to be accompanied by an initial design and access statement, ecological, landscape, contamination, flood and transport assessments, depending upon the location, nature and complexity of the development. In the case of Rural Enterprise Dwelling enquiries, a draft Rural Enterprise Dwelling Appraisal<sup>2</sup> would be required.

If your enquiry is deemed to be very straightforward by the Planning Department and/or is one where free advice is available, you may contact the Planning Department by email at [planning.enquiries@beacons-npa.gov.uk](mailto:planning.enquiries@beacons-npa.gov.uk) or you can make an appointment to attend one of our planning surgeries held in Brecon (every Wednesday 9.30am – 12noon) or Abergavenny (normally the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month between 2pm – 3pm).

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<sup>2</sup> Please see further information regarding Rural Enterprise Dwelling applications in Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for sustainable rural communities available via [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)



## PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE CHARGES

### Guidance Note – 1 April 2014

#### WHAT WE WILL DO

On receipt of your initial enquiry we will check that the appropriate fee has been paid and whether all the necessary information has been submitted. If it has not, we will write to you **within 5 working days** confirming that we will not progress your enquiry, or agree to a meeting, until all relevant information submitted and the appropriate fee has been paid.

If the fee has been paid and all the relevant information submitted, then the Principal Planning Officer will allocate your enquiry to the most appropriate planning officer (the 'Case Officer'). The date of receipt of all the relevant information and fee payment will be considered the valid date.

An acknowledgement will be sent **within 5 working days** of a valid enquiry being received in the Planning Department and the acknowledgement will act as a receipt for any fee paid, confirm the details of the Case Officer and the relevant pre-application reference number and the target date that the Case Officer will aim to provide you with a written reply or confirmation of a meeting as set out in Appendix I.

**If it appears that for any reason that it will not be possible to meet the target response time, the Case Officer will contact you to seek agreement on an extension of time as soon as possible.**

The written reply and/or meeting will comprise the service for the standard charge. Further enquiries will attract additional fees as set out in Appendix I.

The written response will be verified by a Principal Planning Officer and will outline the main relevant planning issues, other constraints and requirements.

The Principal Planning Officers have the right to decline a request for pre-application advice where it is not considered neither appropriate or necessary or where insufficient information has been provided. No charge will be made in these cases.

#### MEETINGS

If a meeting is requested the enquiry will be checked to see whether the appropriate level of information and appropriate fee has been submitted as set out above and the Case Officer will contact you to arrange a suitable date for a meeting within the above timescales.

Attendance of other officers at the meeting, including specialist advisors, will be at the Case Officer's discretion.



## PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE CHARGES

### Guidance Note – 1 April 2014

If you have requested a written response summarising matters discussed at the meeting, the Case Officer will aim to provide this within the timescales set out in Appendix 1 or any other alternative timescale as agreed at the meeting.

#### **PLEASE NOTE**

Any advice given by Authority officers for pre-application enquiries does not infer any formal decision by the Local Planning Authority. Any views or opinions are given without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application.

The final decision on any application that you may then subsequently make can only be taken after the Authority has consulted local people, statutory consultees and any other interested parties. The final decision on an application will be made by the Planning and Rights of Way Committee or under delegated powers in accordance with the Authority's approved Scheme of Delegation and will be based on all of the information available at that time. You should therefore be aware that Officers cannot guarantee the final formal decision that will be made on your application(s).

Any pre-application advice that has been provided will be carefully considered in reaching a decision or recommendation on a subsequent application, subject to the proviso that circumstances and information may change or come to light that could alter that position. Due to changes in planning policies, legislation and case law, the relevance of the pre-application advice may decline over time.

Information related to pre-application discussions may be subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 albeit some exemptions from the need to disclose commercially sensitive information applies. In cases where prospective applicants consider that specific information is exempt the justification for their position should be provided to the local planning authority.

#### **USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS AND WEBLINKS**

Planning Department  
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority  
Plas y Ffynnon  
Cambrian Way  
Brecon  
LD3 7HP  
Tel: 01874 620431  
[planning.enquiries@beacons-npa.gov.uk](mailto:planning.enquiries@beacons-npa.gov.uk)  
[www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk)

**Planning Portal** - [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)  
– please ensure that you are viewing the wales version of the planning portal (indicated in top right corner of website).

**Welsh Government/Planning webpage** -  
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/?lang=en>

## APPENDIX I: PRE-APPLICATION CHARGING SCHEDULE (Including VAT)

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Written Advice only<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Site or Office Meeting only</b>	<b>Written Advice &amp; Meeting</b>	<b>Additional Meetings (per additional meeting)</b>	<b>Additional Written Advice (per additional letter/email)</b>	<b>Target Response – from date of valid enquiry</b>
<b>Category A : Minor queries (including specialist advice where relevant)</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning history searches</li> <li>• PD rights removal enquiries</li> <li>• Householder queries from agents/architects</li> <li>• Enquiries regarding compliance with conditions/enforcement notices</li> <li>• Works to protected trees enquiries</li> <li>• Minor Agricultural and forestry development enquiries</li> <li>• Commercial development (A1, A2, A3 , B1, B2 and B8 uses) other or mixed use development up to 40sqm (gross floorspace)</li> </ul>	£60	£60	£120	£60	£30	20 working day
<b>Category B : Residential, Commercial and Mixed Use Developments</b>						
<b>Category B, Level 1 (including specialist advice where relevant)</b>						

<sup>3</sup> if at the discretion of the Planning Officer, it is deemed that a site visit is necessary in order to provide a response, an additional charge of £60 will be applied.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Written Advice only<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Site or Office Meeting only</b>	<b>Written Advice &amp; Meeting</b>	<b>Additional Meetings (per additional meeting)</b>	<b>Additional Written Advice (per additional letter/email)</b>	<b>Target Response – from date of valid enquiry</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 dwelling including barn conversions (with the exception of agricultural workers/rural enterprise dwellings – see below)</li> </ul>	£180	£60	£240	£60	£60	25 working days
<b>Category B, Level 2 (including specialist advice where relevant)</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 – 5 dwellings including barn conversions (with the exception of agricultural workers/rural enterprise dwellings – see below)</li> <li>Commercial development (A1, A2, A3 , B1, B2 and B8 uses) between 41sqm to 150sqm (gross floorspace)</li> <li>Other or mixed use development of similar scale</li> </ul>	£240	£90	£330	£60	£60	25 working days
<b>Category B, Level 3 (including specialist advice where relevant)</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 – 9 dwellings<sup>4</sup></li> <li>Commercial development (A1, A2, A3 , B1, B2 and B8 uses) 151sqm – 500sqm (gross floorspace)</li> <li>Other or mixed use development of similar scale</li> </ul>	£600	£150	£750	£60	£90	25 working days

<sup>4</sup> If no numbers known, a fee would be calculated based upon the site area and a density of 30dph (dwellings per hectare)



<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Written Advice only<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Site or Office Meeting only</b>	<b>Written Advice &amp; Meeting</b>	<b>Additional Meetings (per additional meeting)</b>	<b>Additional Written Advice (per additional letter/email)</b>	<b>Target Response – from date of valid enquiry</b>
Advertisement Consent enquiries	£60	£60	£120	£60	£30	20 working days
Telecommunication developments not permitted development	£180	£90	£270	£90	£60	20 working days
Renewable energy developments e.g. hydro schemes, solar farms, wind turbines, Anaerobic Digester's ( <u>complex proposals may incur an additional fee to be confirmed by the Case Officer</u> )	£300	£120	£420	£90	£60	25 working days
Pre-application advice for major developments outside National Park	£300	£120	£420	£90	£90	20 working days
Rural Enterprise Dwellings	£240	£60	£300	£60	£60	25 working days
<b>Category D : Specialist Advice Only</b>						
Works to listed buildings	£36 per hour (estimate of fee will be given upon receipt of information, no work will be undertaken prior to the fee being received)				25 working days	
Ecological advice	£36 per hour (estimate of fee will be given upon receipt of information, no work will be undertaken prior to the fee being received)				25 working days	
Archaeological advice	£36 per hour (estimate of fee will be given upon receipt of information, no work will be undertaken prior to the fee being received)				25 working days	

## **PAYMENT METHODS**

**By Cheque** – please make all cheques payable to Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, and if separate from the written correspondence, please provide a covering letter setting out your name, address and the address of the development site which the fee relates to.

**By BACS transfer** –      BANK and BRANCH: Barclays, Brecon Business Bank, 9 The Bulwark, Brecon, LD3 7WS  
                                  ACCOUNT: Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, No. 30387819  
                                  SORT CODE: 20 00 85 (Please reference your on-line payment accordingly)

**By Card** – you can either pay by card in person at the Authority's Offices in Brecon or by telephone via the Planning Department. There are no charges incurred for Debit Card Payments whereas charges are applied to Credit Card Payments.