

Guidance Note:

Pre-Application Planning Advice



Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council considers that early engagement with the local planning authority, in the form of pre-application discussions, helps improve the quality of applications and reduces the time taken to determine an application. In frontloading the system in this way, the aim is to ensure a smooth and speedy determination process.

Welsh Government requires all local planning authorities in Wales to provide a statutory pre-application service. The charges for this service are the same across Wales and the scope of the local planning authority's response is set out in The Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Services) (Wales) Regulations 2016. The Charging Schedule is set out in Appendix 1.

It is not intended to be a process that advises whether planning permission or any other permission/consent is required for a particular proposal. The process for that is to submit an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness.

The Council consider that there are many positive benefits to engaging with the local planning authority before the submission of an application. These include:

- Outlining the relevant planning policies and other material planning considerations that will be taken into account when determining your application.
- Early identification of the need to employ specialists. This may relate to transport, flooding, noise, trees, ecology, archaeology, listed buildings, conversation areas, contaminated land or past mine workings.
- Help to speed up the determination process by providing advice on making a valid application and seeking, where possible, to ensure unacceptable proposals become acceptable.
- Saving you the cost of pursuing an application if a proposal is totally unacceptable.

What do you need to provide to get the best response to a pre-application enquiry?

You will get far more out of the pre-application process if you provide as much relevant 'planning related' information about the proposal as you can. Please provide:

- A pre-application enquiry form.
- A site location plan.
- Details of the nature and scale of the development and the proposed uses of the land and/or buildings.
- Sketch drawings of your proposal. They must either be to scale or have metric dimensions shown.
- Photographs of the site.
- Any other relevant supporting information (e.g. transport survey, ecology survey, noise assessment etc).
- Pre-application fee.

It is also worth considering discussing your proposal with your neighbours prior to the submission of a planning application and, if possible, address any concerns in your submission.

What advice will be provided?

For all statutory pre-application enquiries, only a written response will be provided containing the following:

- The relevant planning site history.
- Relevant policies (and Supplementary Planning Guidance).
- Other material planning considerations.
- Identification of site constraints e.g. flood risk, biodiversity, trees.
- Information, plans and reports that would be required to make an application valid (e.g. coal mining risk assessment and preliminary ecological assessments etc).
- Any potential planning obligations and/or Community Infrastructure Level (CIL).
- An initial assessment of the proposed development.

For non-statutory pre-application enquires, in addition to the statutory requirements, the following would also be provided:

- A virtual or an in-person meeting to discuss the proposal.
- More in-depth advice, which reviews the proposal in more detail.
- Where appropriate advice on how the proposal could be amended and improved to comply with the relevant policies and guidance.

How long will the process take?

The local planning authority encourages pre-application enquiries to be submitted by e-mail (see contact details below). If an e-mail address is provided then you will receive a response from your case officer acknowledging receipt of your enquiry.

If a valid statutory pre-application enquiry is received, there is a requirement to provide a written response within 21 days or such other period as may be agreed in writing between the applicant and local planning authority. Clearly, more complex proposals may take longer. For non-statutory pre-application enquiries the timescale for any written response can be agreed to provide flexibility for setting up a meeting and to provide a comprehensive response.

A meeting will be offered as part of the non-statutory pre-application enquiry, once the necessary form, fee and any pre-application information have been received. A meeting would typically be conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams or in-person at the Council Officers at Unit 5 Triangle Business Park, Pentrebach, CF48 4TQ.

Fee - The fee is non-refundable and will not be deducted from any future planning application.

Please Note

Pre-application advice is provided at an officer level and is thus not the formal decision of the Council. The final decision on any application submitted, following your pre-application enquiry, can only be taken after the Council has consulted local people, statutory consultees and any other interested parties. The final decision on an application may also rest with the Planning, Regulatory and Licensing Committee.

Any information relating to pre-application advice may be subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If you consider that the information you provide is commercially sensitive or should be confidential for other reasons, and therefore not subject to the disclosure requirements of the Act, you should include a statement to this effect in your submission.

Contact Details

Planning Division, Unit 5 Triangle Business Park, Pentrebach, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4TQ
Tel: (01685) 725000
E-mail: planning@merthyr.gov.uk

Other Useful Contacts



www.planningportal.gov.uk

(You will need to view the Welsh version of the planning portal (indicated in the top right hand corner of the web-site)



wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/?lang=en