PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE FOR APPLICANTS

Issued 10th November 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 In line with national planning policy, the Council welcomes and encourages discussion before a developer submits an application for development. Whilst the outcome of an application cannot be guaranteed, a planning application is more likely to succeed if it is well prepared, supported by the development plan and properly addresses any matters raised at pre-application stage. This should also ensure a speedier delivery of decision, time and cost savings and higher quality developments. This is a valuable process because it can identify the principal planning issues and can deter applications that have little or no prospect of success.

1.2 We will give you the best advice possible based on the information submitted. Any views or opinions expressed are given in good faith and to the best of our ability without prejudice to formal consideration of any planning application, which will be subject to public consultation and ultimately decided by the Local Planning Authority. The pre-application advice provided can greatly improve the acceptability of planning submissions and avoid validation issues.

1.3 It should be noted that subsequent alterations to local, regional and national planning policies may affect the advice given.

1.4 To make the most of the pre-application service offered by the Council, applicants are advised to submit as much information as possible (Please see Appendix 2 for list of drawings and documents). The more information that you are able to provide us with, the more valuable and accurate our advice will be. The LPA will only propose/agree a meeting date for pre-application discussions once the correct form, fee and supporting information has been received.

2. Pre-Application Advice Service

2.1 We offer a range of pre-application services, which are dependent upon the scale, type and complexity of the proposed development and the associated town planning issues.

2.2 There are essentially 4 Pre-Application Advice Services on offer which include:

(1) Free Duty Planning consultation;
(2) Follow Up Duty Planning Advice;
(3) Full Pre-Application Advice; and
(4) Follow Up Full Pre-Application Advice.

2.3 Details of the level of service provision within these categories are outlined below. Information on service thresholds and associated fees payable are outlined in Appendix 1. An application form for the Pre-Application Advice Service is available to download from the Council's website at: https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/planning-advice

(1) Free Duty Planning Advice

2.3.1 A free duty planner service, covering advice to third parties (including those affected by proposals) and advice on householder and other minor developments is available via email correspondence only. The duty planning officer will provide feedback which is based on information submitted for consideration. Should you require follow up correspondence, this will be charged as per the fee schedule set out below in '(2) Follow Up duty Planning Advice'.

2.3.2 The free duty planning advice service is specifically directed towards local residents and small local businesses that may be wishing to extend or alter their property or undertake small scale alterations and changes of use. Please note that we will only be able to provide comments on very small scale/simple proposals through this service and we will direct you to our paid pre-application services where we consider this more appropriate, having regard to the scale/nature of the proposed development. In all cases, the advice given will be in response to the material that is presented. Please note that as part of this free service, a site visit cannot be made, but you may provide photographs of the site to aid discussions.

2.3.3 To request planning advice, please email planning@hillingdon.gov.uk, including the details of your enquiry, any relevant information and attachments.

(2) Follow Up Duty Planning Advice

2.3.4 Should you wish to receive any formal written advice following your duty planning advice, applicants are required to complete the application form and make a formal request for a written response and make the necessary payment for the service. Full details of the Charges are outlined in Appendix 1. There are varying charges for follow up advice, subject to the type of enquiry being made; therefore it is important to provide as much information as possible.

2.3.5 Applicants are also advised that a request for written formal advice must be made and payments received within three weeks of the initial planning advice. Requests made after three weeks will not be considered.

2.3.6 Following the valid receipt of the formal written request for follow up advice, a response will be given by Officers within 15 working days.

(3) Full Pre-Application Advice

2.3.7 There are a range of development/application types (minor, medium and major scale) which clearly benefit from formal pre-application engagement. Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage in formal pre-application arrangements in these situations. The duty planning officer service will not be in a position to provide guidance on development which falls within this category.

2.3.8 The full pre-application advice service involves the submission of planning application material, such as plans and supporting documents (See Appendix 2 for list of drawings and documents). This will be scrutinised by the planning case officer who will be allocated to your scheme. Generally, the more information you can give us the more assistance we can give you in developing your proposals and making your application. There may need to be follow up advice (50% of the cost of the initial advice) with payment made prior to the request for follow up pre-application advice being accepted or progressed.

2.3.9 In all instances a case officer will be allocated to a formal pre-application submission. More complex proposals may require the involvement of other officers and the Council retains absolute discretion as to who is involved in delivering the service.

2.3.10 It is considered that for more complex applications, the opportunity to obtain good quality advice that will carry weight in the decision-making process is worth the investment in the pre-application service. In certain circumstances, the Council might require independent external advice (particularly associated with the scheme viability, daylight and sunlight review, retail and environmental impact assessments) and the applicant will be expected to meet the costs of these forms of independent advice. These additional costs are also outlined in Appendix 1.

2.3.11 Appendix 2 of this document provides details of the process and anticipated timescales for the full pre-application advice service. Please note that the timescales cannot always be guaranteed, and some pre-application enquiries may take longer to process. For example, due to the level of complexity, if amendments are considered (see below), or if there is a need to involve consultees or external consultants.

2.3.12 For all scale G development (see Appendix 1) Officers will not attend a site visit as standard procedure and the advice provided will be in written form only (i.e. no meeting will be arranged). To assist in the quality of advice provided you are encouraged to submit photographs of the site to inform the LPA's consideration of the proposals.

2.3.13 For all scale E, F & G development (see Appendix 1) Officers will not accept the submission of amendments for consideration. For scale A, B, C and D development, the fees are based on an allowance of only 1 set of amendments to the original proposals. Further amendments that applicants wish to be considered will be subject to a further pre-application fee.

(4) Follow up Full Pre-Application Advice

2.3.14 Follow up Full Pre-Application Advice can be requested within 12 months of the initial advice being provided. If a request for follow up advice (with correct form, fees and supporting details) is received after a period of twelve months from the initial advice then the full fee will be required to be paid. Schemes submitted for follow up advice will need to be substantially similar to the original proposals to qualify. The LPA retains the right to determine whether a request for follow up advice qualifies for the reduced fee.

3. Cancellations and Refunds

3.1 The Council reserves the right to cancel a pre-application advice meeting (Scale A to F) if the appropriate payment has not been made. A refund cannot be given if an applicant subsequently cancels a meeting, as preparatory work would already have taken place.

4. Planning Performance Agreements

4.1 Central Government encourages the use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) for larger and more complex major planning proposals to bring together the developer, the Local Planning Authority and key stakeholders to work in partnership throughout the planning process. A PPA can be used to ensure provision of a dedicated planning resource focusing on your application to ensure it is dealt with as a priority and it is highly recommended that you enter into a PPA. This typically involves funding from the developer to allow the Authority to retain adequate resourcing across the Planning Service.

4.2 The key advantage to entering into a PPA is that the Council will have the resources in place to ensure that the application proceeds through the application process in a timely fashion and result in high quality development. Ed Laughton and Noel Kelly are available to discuss the details of a PPA (elaughton@hillingdon.gov.uk & nkelly@hillingdon.gov.uk).

5. Contact details

5.1 If you have any queries regarding the pre-application advice service then please email planning@hillingdon.gov.uk.

Appendix 1; Pre-application Charging Schedule

Category	Type of Development	Fee (inc VAT)	Follow Up Written Advice Charge (inc VAT)
Duty Planner Advice	**Duty Planner advice** - Enforcement complaints; - Advice to third parties (neighbours/resident associations etc); - Small scale extensions and alterations to single domestic dwelling; and - Small scale developments and/or adverts relating to business premises.	Free	
	Planning/Householder Advice **Follow up Written Advice** - Follow up requested pre-application correspondence; - Permitted Development Enquiry (N.B Application for a certificate of Lawful Development is recommended as an alternative); - Conveyance Enquiries relating to planning applications; - Confirmation of S106 Obligations Compliance; and - Confirmation of Conditions Approval.	£110; General Proposals	
	Tree Works **Follow Up Written Advice** - £50 for a single tree; and - £100 for multiple trees.	£50; Single Tree Advice/ High hedge £100; Multiple Tree Advice	
	Enforcement Queries **Follow up Written Advice** - Responding to Solicitors enquiries related to conveyancing matters of an enforcement nature.	£198	
A	**Large Scale Strategic Development-** as defined by the 'Mayors Order 2008' (and any subsequent amendments) - 150+ residential units; - 15,000sqm +; and - RMA for large scale strategic development. N.B. costs associated with independent review of specialist documents (e.g. Viability, retail impact, daylight and sunlight) will be subject to consultant fees.	£17,484	£8,742

B	**Large Scale Major Development** - 50-149 residential units; - 10,000-14,999sqm; and - RMA for large scale major development. N.B. costs associated with independent review of specialist documents (e.g. Viability, retail impact, daylight and sunlight) will be subject to consultant fees.	£14,604	£7,302
C	**Major Development** - 10-49 residential units; - 1,000-9,999sqm; and - RMA for major development. N.B. costs associated with independent review of specialist documents (e.g. Viability, retail impact, daylight and sunlight) will be subject to consultant fees.	£12,612	£6,306
D	**Large Scale Minor Development** - 5-9 residential units; - 500-999sqm; and - RMA for large scale minor development.	£4,776	£2,388
E	**Medium Scale Minor Development** - 2-4 residential units;	£3,648	£1,824
F	**Small Scale Minor Development** - 1 residential unit.	£2,220	£1,110
G	**Small Scale / Householder Development** - Proposals for extensions and alterations to dwellinghouses including proposals requiring conservation advice and alterations and extensions to listed buildings; - 250 to 499sqm; - Advertisement Proposals; - Proposals for S96a/S73 for minor developments - Approval of Details/Clearance of Planning Conditions; - Miscellaneous proposals not included within this schedule (E.g. Proposals for car parking, landscaping, HMOs, physical alterations to small commercial properties etc). - RMA for small scale minor development. (including Certificate of Lawfulness, Prior Approval (residential and commercial)	£504	£252

Appendix 2; Full Pre-Application Advice Service

Applicants are required to complete and submit a 'Request for Pre-application Advice' form, which can be found on the Council's website at: https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/planning-advice, alongside the requisite fee and supporting documentation.

Information	Scale A - C	Scale D - G
Completed Pre-Application Form and fee	x	x
A description of the proposed development, including schedule of uses and floorspaces	x	x
Information about the existing uses, floor space, occupation, parking, jobs etc	x	x
Site Location Plan (Scale 1:1250)	x	x
Drawings; Existing and Proposed plans and elevations at an appropriate scale (1:100/1:200)	x	x
Information about existing site conditions including trees, ecology and BNG.	x	x
Site photographs (these are particularly important for Scale G advice requests but will also assist and inform all scales of development advice provided).	x	x
Information about car parking, servicing, access arrangements, traffic generation etc.	x	x
Draft Design and Access Statement (where appropriate).	x	x
Information about affordable housing/retail impact/daylight and sunlight.*	x	
Heritage Statement and Other Environmental Considerations (e.g. Water Efficiency, Water Management, Drainage, Land Contamination)	x	x

* N.B. costs associated with independent review of specialist documents (e.g. Viability, retail impact, daylight and sunlight) will be subject to consultant fees.

Process and Anticipated Timescales

Timescales cannot be guaranteed for pre-applications and may vary, e.g. due to the level of complexity of a particular enquiry; whether amendments are considered (Scales A-D only); or, if there is a need to involve consultees or external consultants. Anticipated timescales are explained below:

Within 15 working days of receiving a valid submission (form, fee and supporting documentation), an Officer will contact you either by phone or in writing to:

- Confirm the name and contact details of the case officer who will be handling your enquiry;
- Make a request for any additional information required to assess your proposal further;
- Arrange a site visit if access to the property is required*;
- Arrange a meeting between LBH Officers and the Applicant*.

*Excludes Scale G Pre-Application advice requests

Meetings are normally held over Microsoft Teams, although in some instances it may be appropriate to hold a face to face or on-site meeting to review the site and proposals. Officers will discuss this with you when arranging the pre-application meeting.

Following an initial pre-application meeting, applicants applying for Scale A, B, C and D level advice (Major Applications & Large Scale Minor Development) are able to submit 1 set of amendments to the original proposal for consideration, revisions will be considered as part of the final formal response letter. This information must be submitted within 3 weeks of the meeting date and formal comments will be based on the revisions received. Revisions/amendments will not be accepted for Scale E, F & G pre-application submissions.

- Officers will generally (subject to the complexity of the matters being considered) issue a formal response to applicants within 15 working days of any meeting being held or additional information having been received for consideration under Scale A, B, C or D development.

In the event that additional information is provided for consideration under Scale A, B, C or D, Officers may require additional time to consult other departments and this may lead to a delay in issuing comments within the timeframes stipulated above.