



Development Management Pre-Application Advice

Protocol for Member Engagement in Pre-Application Enquiries and Prior to a Meeting of the Planning Committee (February 2026)

Government guidance on pre-application advice is available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/before-submitting-an-application>

It makes clear, *'pre-application engagement is a collaborative process between a prospective applicant and other parties which may include:*

- *the local planning authority*
- *statutory and non-statutory consultees*
- *elected members*
- *local people*

It is recognised that the parties involved at the pre-application stage will vary on a case by case basis, and the level of engagement needs to be proportionate to the nature and scale of a proposed development. Each party involved has an important role to play in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of pre-application engagement'

The Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2021 states,

'Government guidance encourages pre-application engagement with the community where it will add value to the process and the outcome. We will therefore encourage developers and promoters for large scale development to undertake their own consultation and engagement process with local people'

A Planning Advisory Service (PAS) review of decision making by the Council's Planning Committee (August 2025) recommended that the Council reviews the way that Councillors are involved in planning proposals both at pre-application stage and in the build-up to planning committee. PAS guidance highlights the advantages of involving Councillors to help convey local feelings about development and improve planning outcomes.

The Council's Development Management Service will therefore offer the following opportunities for 'major developments' as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended).

Pre-Application Stage

1. one confidential meeting at pre-application stage with the relevant ward councillor (subject to agreement) supported by the case or supervising officer. An hourly rate will be added to the pre-application fee as set out in the



Council's published charges. The Councillor will not express their views on the proposals but will identify local issues that the promoter may wish to consider in preparing their application. A record of those issues will form part of the Council's pre-application response.

2. one confidential meeting at pre-application stage with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management (subject to agreement) supported by the case or supervising officer. An hourly rate will be added to the pre-application fee as set out in the Council's published charges. The Councillor will not express their views on the proposals but will identify strategic issues that the promoter may wish to consider in preparing their application. A record of those issues will form part of the Council's pre-application response.

Application Stage

3. following the submission of an application for planning permission, an on-line presentation about the development proposals to both the Chair of Planning Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management supported by the case and supervising officer. An hourly rate will be charged as set out in the Council's published charges. The Councillors will not express their views on the proposals but will ask questions of clarification. A record of the questions and answers will be appended to the officer report presented to the Planning Committee.
4. following the publication of an agenda for planning committee, a five minute on-line presentation to members of the Planning Committee or their substitutes, following by five minutes of questions from Councillors. A set fee will be charged as set out in the Council's published charges. The Councillors will not express their views on the proposals but will ask questions of clarification. A record of the questions and answers will be published not later than 4pm on the day before the committee meets.