

## PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE CHARGING SCHEDULE 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026

The Council's Scheme for charging for planning advice is set out below. When submitting an enquiry, which must be on the Council's standard form, you will receive an acknowledgement setting out the target date for the Council to respond. The department aims to provide advice on Householder Development within 35 days from validation, and advice for all other development types within 56 days from validation. **Where an officer meeting and detailed written advice has been applied and paid for, meetings will usually be scheduled after the internal consultation period has concluded (thus after 28 days) to enable any consultee comments to be discussed at the meeting.** However, these timeframes are only a guide and are not binding on the service.

Pre-app charges include VAT

| Cat                    | Development Type  | Detailed Written Advice | Officer Meeting & Written Advice Combined | Follow-up Written Advice | Follow-up Meeting only | Follow-up Meeting & Written Advice Combined |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <b>Residential</b>     |   |                         |   |                          |                        |   |
| 1                      | Householder Development (alterations/extensions and other works within existing single domestic properties; does not include new dwellings) (For listed building advice only see option 14)   | £393.60                 | Not Available                             | £196.80                  | Not Available          | Not Available                               |
| 2                      | 1 residential unit (including replacement dwellings and retirement dwellings/care home units)   | £570                    | £1138.80                                  | £488.40                  | £488.40                | £976.80                                     |
| 3                      | 2 - 25 residential units (including retirement dwellings/care home units)   | £976.80                 | £2277.60                                  | £976.80                  | £976.80                | £1627.20                                    |
| 4                      | 26 - 49 residential units (including retirement dwellings/care home units)  | £3110.40                | £5443.20                                  | £2332.80                 | £2332.80               | £3888                                       |
| 5                      | 50 - 99 residential units (including retirement dwellings/care home units)  | £7776                   | £11664                                    | PPA                      | PPA                    | PPA   |
| 6                      | >100 residential units (including retirement dwellings/care home units)   | PPA                     | PPA                                       | PPA                      | PPA                    | PPA   |
| 7                      | >200+ residential units (including retirement dwellings/care home units)  | PPA                     | PPA                                       | PPA                      | PPA                    | PPA   |
| <b>Non-Residential</b> |   |                         |   |                          |                        |   |
| 8                      | Creation of under 999 sq.m of non-residential development. This includes but not limited to: roads, floor space, hardstandings, car parks, all new structures and site coverage including those for open storage sites, battery storage facilities or solar farms | £650.40                 | £1138.80                                  | £488.40                  | £488.40                | £976.80                                     |

|    |   |   |          |               |               |               |
|----|---|---|----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 9  | Creation of 1000 - 1999 sq.m of non-residential development. This includes but not limited to: roads, floor space, hardstandings, car parks, all new structures and site coverage including those for open storage sites, battery storage facilities or solar farms | £1302   | £2277.60 | £976.80       | £976.80       | £1952.40      |
| 10 | Creation of 2000 - 4999 sq.m of non-residential development. This includes but not limited to: roads, floor space, hardstandings, car parks, all new structures and site coverage including those for open storage sites, battery storage facilities or solar farms | £3110.40  | £5443.20 | £2332.80      | £2332.80      | £3888         |
| 11 | Creation of >5000 sq.m of non-residential development. This includes but not limited to: roads, floor space, hardstandings, car parks, all new structures and site coverage including those for open storage sites, battery storage facilities or solar farms       | £4665.60  | £6998.40 | PPA           | PPA           | PPA           |
| 12 | Creation of >7500+ sq.m of non-residential development. This includes but not limited to: roads, floor space, hardstandings, car parks, all new structures and site coverage including those for open storage sites, battery storage facilities or solar farms      | PPA   | PPA      | PPA           | PPA           | PPA           |
|    | <b>Other</b>  |   |          |               |               |               |
| 13 | Advertisements, changes of use only (with no development), telecommunications, & external alterations to buildings only e.g. cladding   | £393.60   | £524.40  | £196.80       | £261.60       | £458.40       |
| 14 | Listed Building Advice only – householder only  | £388.80   | £583.20  | £291.60       | £388.80       | £680.40       |
| 15 | Listed Building Advice only – non householder   | £583.20   | £1166.40 | £291.60       | £388.80       | £680.40       |
| 16 | Specialist Tree Advice only   | Not Available   | £488.40  | Not Available | Not Available | Not Available |
| 17 | Designated and/or protected landscapes and habitats (e.g. SPA, SSSI, Ramsar site)   | £583.20   | £1166.40 | Not Available | Not Available | Not Available |
| 18 | Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) and Initial Meeting prior to a PPA (PID)  | For any proposals that would require a Planning Performance Agreement or you would like an Initial Meeting prior to entering into a Planning Performance Agreement please refer to the page <a href="http://www.bedford.gov.uk/planningPPA">www.bedford.gov.uk/planningPPA</a> for more details |          |               |               |               |

### **Exemptions & Reductions (these only apply as specified below)**

1. Householder Written Advice (Category 1) will be given free of charge to people with registered disabilities. The applicant will be required to provide proof of disability (for example from a GP or Social Services) to be eligible for free advice. That information will be held confidentially.
2. Parish and Town Councils will be given detailed written advice free of charge for Category 13 proposals. However, Parish and Town Councils will be required to pay 50% of the full fees for any requested meetings and/or follow-up advice. Parish and Town Councils will be required to pay full fees for advice for proposals outside of Category 13 (no reduction).
3. Bedford Borough Council departments will be required to pay 50% of the full fees for any requested detailed written advice, meetings or follow-up advice for their own developments. However, applications submitted by a Council department with joint external applicants will be required to pay the full fees (no reduction).

### **Pre-Application Planning Advice Charging Schedule Explanatory Notes**

1. Each pre-application enquiry will result in a single response of the Development Type paid for. If applicants would like further advice following the initial pre-application response, then a request for follow-up advice can be submitted and additional fees will apply. This may be for follow-up advice on provision of additional information or for follow-up advice on a slightly amended scheme, prior to the submission of an application.  
  
The follow-up pre-application procedure is only available to the original applicant and within 6 months of the original pre-application advice response date. For the avoidance of doubt, follow-up advice is not available for significantly altered proposals and applicants seeking advice on significantly altered proposals will be told to submit a new pre-application request and pay the full fee. The decision on whether follow up advice is applicable will rest with the planning department.
2. The pre-application service fee is non-refundable unless the application for advice is withdrawn prior to any internal consultations being commenced, prior to any meeting being held (where one was paid for and no internal consultations have taken place), or prior to any written advice being provided (where only written advice was paid for and no internal consultations have taken place).
3. Although every effort will be made to meet the target timescales, if we require a longer response period in individual circumstances, council officers will endeavour to notify developers/householders accordingly. Not meeting a timescale is not grounds for a fee refund. Refunds are only issued in line with Explanatory Note 2 above.
4. The description of development for pre-application advice must be detailed on the form and provide sufficient detail for the planning department to determine the most appropriate fee category and the level of officer experience required to provide the response. The form must therefore specify the amount of residential development sought or the amount of commercial floorspace sought (or site coverage in cases for open storage and solar arrays). Where outline proposals are submitted with no specific or approximate quantum of development identified, the Council will make a decision as to which fee category the pre-application enquiry falls into.
5. In cases where proposals fall within more than one of the development type categories, the charge will not be the sum of the relevant fees but will be set at the highest of those relevant fees. The decision on which charge to apply will rest with the planning department.
6. The pre-application service does not consult external consultees, and applicants requiring advice from other statutory bodies, such as National Highways, Historic England, The Environment Agency, etc., should make independent enquiries with those bodies.
7. With the exception of Householder Development (Category 1), the planning department generally consults with relevant Council departments before providing a formal response; it also aims to invite the

relevant consultees to any scheduled meeting which has been paid for. However, consultee attendance cannot be guaranteed and the unavailability of a consultee to attend the meeting will not result in a reduced fee or any fee refund. The pre-application service is planning officer led.

8. The officer meeting may be in person at Borough Hall, on site, or via video conference. The meeting is scheduled for up to one hour, except for proposals of 200+ residential units or 10,000 sq.m or more of non-residential floorspace, where the meeting may be up to two hours. Follow-up meetings will be up to one hour only.
9. Requests for advice on whether **an existing use(s) or existing development is lawful** will not be processed. Please apply for a [Lawful Development Certificate](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms) at [www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms) so a legal decision can be made and issued by our legal team.
10. Requests for advice on whether **a proposed use or a proposed development is 'permitted development'** will not be processed. Please submit an application for a Lawful Development Certificate or a relevant Prior Notification application instead. You apply at [www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms). Please see point I. on the next page for clarification.
- I. Pre-application advice is an informal officer opinion and it is not legally binding. For proposed development about permitted development, a PREAPP response would advise a Certificate would still be required, thereby incurring you, the applicant, additional costs and time for a decision to be made. Find further information on [Lawful Development Certificates](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms) and apply as point 10.
11. Any pre-application advice given is made in good faith and represents the informal opinion of an officer and not necessarily that of the council. Advice will be based on current policies, planning history, planning legislation and the quality of information you submit. Any advice given doesn't constitute a formal decision and doesn't prejudice any future formal decisions made by the council of any formal planning application, which will be subject to wider consultation and publicity. Planning applications submitted without pre-application discussions which require significant amendments during the planning application process to make the development acceptable are likely to be refused without negotiation.
12. All pre-application submissions and advice provided will not be placed online. However, please note that pre-application enquiries may need to be released as part of a Freedom of Information request even if a planning application has not been submitted, and pre-application advice may be referred to in planning officer reports if a formal planning application is subsequently made. As a result, the Council cannot guarantee confidentiality of the applicant, supporting documents or the officer's advice.
13. Please ensure you provide the site location plan with the site outlined in red at a scale of 1:1250 or 1:2500 and ensure you have fully completed the form including the description of development and for non-householder and non-residential requests the sq.m of development and for residential requests the number of houses, flats etc., as explained in rule 4 above. Failure to do so will invalidate your request. Planning can only respond based on the information you supply and cannot design the scheme for you, therefore you must provide as much detail as possible such as the parameters of the development, design etc. that you want us to consider and advice on. If you are using an agent all correspondence will be with them. To find out more about the planning process please see [www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-applicants-agents](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-applicants-agents).