

**PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE  
 CHARGING SCHEDULE  
 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023**

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)	£135	Not Available	£89	Not Available	Not Available
2	1 residential unit (including replacement dwellings and retirement dwellings/care home units)	£367	£550	£245	£245	£367
3	2 - 25 residential units (including retirement dwellings/care home units)	£668	£1,000	£445	£445	£668
4	26 - 50 residential units (including retirement dwellings/care home units)	£1,667	£2,500	£1,111	£1,111	£1,667
5	51 - 100 residential units (including retirement dwellings/care home units)	£3,333	£5,000	£2,222	£2,222	£3,333
6	101 - 200 residential units (including retirement dwellings/care home units)	£5,000	£7,500	£3,333	£3,333	£5,000
7	200+ residential units (including retirement dwellings/care home units)	£8,000	£12,000	£5,332	£5,332	£8,000
<b>Non-Residential</b>						
8	Creation of under 1000 sq.m of non-residential floor space or site coverage for open storage sites, battery storage facilities or solar farms	£295	£443	£196	£196	£295
9	Creation of 1000 - 2499 sq.m of non-residential floor space or site coverage for open storage sites, battery storage facilities or solar farms	£833	£1,250	£555	£555	£833

10	Creation of 2500 - 4999 sq.m of non-residential floor space or site coverage for open storage sites, battery storage facilities or solar farms	£1,333	£2,000	£889	£889	£1,333
11	Creation of 5000 - 9999 sq.m of non-residential floor space or site coverage for open storage sites, battery storage facilities or solar farms	£2,000	£3,000	£1,333	£1,333	£2,000
12	Creation of 10,000+ sq.m of non-residential floor space or site coverage for open storage sites, battery storage facilities or solar farms	£3,333	£5,000	£2,222	£2,222	£3,333
<b>Other</b>						
13	Advertisements, telecommunications, changes of use & external alterations only (as long as they are not creating new dwellings or commercial floor space),	£204	£307	£136	£136	£204
14	Listed Building Advice only – householder only	£167	£250	£111	£111	£167
15	Listed Building Advice only – non householder	£276	£414	£184	£184	£276
16	Specialist Tree Advice only	Not Available	£93	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
17	Planning Performance Agreements and Bespoke Fees	For proposals which are outside of the above categories or for applicants looking to enter into a planning performance agreement please contact the Development Management Team via <a href="mailto:planning@bedford.gov.uk">planning@bedford.gov.uk</a> for advice and discussion. A PPA/Bespoke Fee will be offered only at the discretion of the Development Management Manager or Chief Officer for Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Growth.				

### **Exemptions & Reductions**

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.
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 request for pre-application advice must 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 request must therefore specify an approximate amount of residential development sought or the approximate 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. Applicants are advised to submit an application for a Lawful Development Certificate, as such requests require a formal legal decision to be made. Further information on a Lawful Development Certificate can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lawful-development-certificates>.
10. Requests for advice on whether a proposed use or a proposed development is 'permitted development' will be processed. However, applicants are hereby advised to submit an application for a Lawful

Development Certificate or a relevant Prior Notification application instead if they wish to be provided with a formally binding decision. Pre-application advice will only be an informal officer opinion, it is not binding and in some circumstances may conclude that a Lawful Development Certificate should still be submitted, thereby incurring you, the applicant, additional costs and time for a decision to be made. Further information on a Lawful Development Certificate can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lawful-development-certificates>.

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.