



PROTOCOL FOR CHARGING FOR PLANNING PRE-APPLICATION AND POST APPLICATION ADVICE

April 2024





What is Pre-Application Advice?

Pre-application advice is recognised as an important part of the planning process.

In line with the vast majority of local authorities Dacorum Borough Council has introduced a pre-application advice service, for which a fee is payable. To apply for pre planning application advice you will need to complete the online form linked below.

The pre-application service provided by Dacorum seeks to improve the quality of the applications submitted, with the aim of delivering quality outcomes to the benefit of the customer, the council and the community at large.



What are the benefits of using the Dacorum's pre-application advice service?

The Council's pre-application advice service offers an opportunity to meet a Planning Officer for an informal discussion before you submit an application. It can therefore provide an invaluable opportunity for you to discuss your proposals without needing to go to the full expense of submitting all the documents required for a full planning application.

Pre-application advice is also encouraged for the following reasons:

- We will verify the list of local and national requirements that the Planning Department will require in order to validate your application. This will reduce the likelihood of submitting invalid applications, saving time and expense.
- The process will generally give more certainty and clarity at an early stage by identifying planning issues, policies and requirements before an application is submitted so that speedier decisions can be made.
- Planning Officers will provide positive advice about improving schemes, not just advise whether they are likely to be supported.
- It establishes whether a proposal is completely unacceptable to the Council which in turn may influence your decision whether to pursue the matter any further.



How much is the service?

	Description of service	Cost
Dwellings		
Householder – Written advice only	Householder: extensions, outbuildings, etc. - written advice only	£225
Householder	Householder: extensions, outbuildings, etc. Non-Listed Building	£450
Householder	Householder: extensions, outbuildings, etc. Listed Building	£550
New single dwelling – Written Advice only	Developments creating one new single dwelling or replacing an existing dwelling	£400
New single dwelling	Developments creating one new single dwelling or replacing an existing dwelling	£800
New Dwellings	2 to 9 dwellings	£1250
New Dwellings	10 to 24 dwellings	£2000
New Dwellings	25 to 50 dwellings	£3400
New Dwellings	51+ dwellings	Tailored quote based on application
Commercial		
Commercial/non residential	up to 100m ²	£450
Commercial/non residential	Over 100m ² up to 300m	£750
Commercial/non residential	Over 300m ² to 1,000m ²	£2500
Commercial/non residential	Over 1,000m ² to 5,000m ²	£3400
Commercial/non residential	Over 5,000m ²	Tailored quote based on application
Other Services		
Check the type of planning application needed	For all development types	£80
Further advice or meetings	Additional officer time tailored to your requirements	£160 per hour or part thereof (minimum £160)



What is included in each service? Residential development

Service	51+ New Dwellings	25 to 50 New dwellings	10 to 24 New dwellings	2 to 9 New dwellings	New single dwelling	New single dwelling – Written Advice only	Household-er	Household-er – Written advice only	Household-er – Listed Building
30 working day turnaround		✓	✓						
20 working day turnaround				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site Visit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Initial and final Plan Review and feedback	✓	✓							
Final Plan Review			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planning History Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Site Constraints Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Urban Design input	✓	✓							
Trees & Woodlands input	✓	✓							
Conservation input (as required)	✓	✓							✓
1-2-1 officer time (2 hours)	✓	✓							
1-2-1 officer time (1 hour)			✓	✓					
1-2-1 officer time (0.5 hours)					✓				
Required documents checklist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Validation advice and checking service	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Post permission support (2 hours)	✓	✓							
Post permission support (1 hour)			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Part of case review process	✓	✓	✓						
Full report (PDF) delivered via email	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Summary report (PDF) delivered via email						✓		✓	

What is included in each service? Commercial development

Service	Over 5,000m ²	Over 1,000m ² to 5,000m ²	Over 300m ² to 1,000m ²	Over 100m ² up to 300m ²	up to 100m ²
30 working day turnaround		✓	✓		
20 working day turnaround				✓	✓
Site Visit	✓	✓	✓		
Initial and final Plan Review and feedback	✓	✓			
Final Plan Review			✓	✓	✓
Planning History Report	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site Constraints Report	✓*	✓	✓*	✓	✓
Meetings x 2	✓				
Meeting x 1 (1 hour)		✓			
Meeting x 1 (0.5 hours)			✓	✓	
Required documents checklist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Validation advice and checking service	✓				
Post permission support (2 hours)	✓				
Post permission support (1 hour)		✓			
Part of case review process	✓*				
Full report (PDF) delivered via email	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓



Service description

Please note that not all services are provided with every pre-application type, please see the tables on pages 5 and 6 for full details of what is included.

Site Visit:

A site visit will consist of up to an hour of time onsite with your case officer depending on the pre-application type purchased, giving you the chance to discuss your scheme and identify opportunities and risks. To get the best value out of this service we recommend that you arrange the site visit before any plans are drafted. This approach may save you time and money with re-drafting drawings.

Initial and final Plan Review and feedback:

Initial plans should be submitted before your site visit your site visit. The initial plan review and feedback is an informal opportunity to make adjustments to the design to maximise the development, before submitting your final plan for review and receiving your report. Using this approach increase the chances of getting applications approved as quickly as possible when submitting your planning application.

Plan Review and feedback:

The plans submitted to us will be reviewed by your case officer and you will receive either the full report or a summary report depending on the service you have opted for.

Planning History Report:

A full site history investigation will be conducted and a report of site history will be produced as part of your pre-application pack.

Site Constraints Report:

A full site constraints investigation will be conducted and a list of the planning constraints will be produced as part of your pre-application pack.

Urban Design input:

Our team of experienced urban designers and conservation specialists will provide advice for the development of new and alterations to the existing built environment and historic places within the borough. The team will use our wide ranging knowledge to provide insights and solutions to develop design solutions and ensure a higher quality of development which responds to and enhances its surroundings.



Service description

1-2-1 officer time:

Meetings or discussions with your case officer will be for the period of time set out in the table above and will be conducted by phone, video call or face- to- face, to the maximum time allocated to the service you have purchased.

Required documents checklist:

To help ensure you have all of the correct and relevant documentation when you submit your planning application, we will provide a comprehensive list of documents required. This will help speed up the validation process and allow the Council to determine your application as quickly as possible.

Validation advice and checking service:

Once your application has been received our dedicated team of validation experts will check your documentation and work with you should any changes or additional information be required.

Post permission support:

Things change but it does not have to be a problem. Often during the build phase of a development it can become necessary to make changes to the design. This can be for a number of reasons that only come to light as the build progresses. Our post -permission support service will be able to guide you through the planning process should things change.

Part of case review process:

As an application for a major development your pre-application will enter our case review process, highlighting the importance of the development and considering it in the wider scope of development across the borough.

Summary report (PDF) delivered via email:

The report will review all of the relevant material planning considerations associated with your application and give feedback detailing the good points, areas for improvement to help secure permission and elements that will prevent your permission being granted. The report will give an indication of whether the Council is likely to support the scheme.



Service description

Trees & Woodlands input:

For applications with tree(s) subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), in a conservation area or that have trees likely to be impacted by the development, our in-house Arboriculturalists will review the details and make recommendations to improve the relationship between the built and natural environment.

Full report (PDF) delivered via email:

The report will review all of the relevant material planning considerations associated with your application and balance them against local and national planning policies. The report will give an indication of whether the Council is likely to support the scheme and if not, make recommendations for overcoming any issues. This should place you in a better position when you apply and reduce the risk of refusal.

Further advice or meetings

If you feel that you require further time, in addition to the services included in the pre-application you have purchased, we will be happy to provide you a quote based on your requirements.

20 and 30 working day turn around

This will start from the first full working day after we have received your application through the website, for email and other means of application this will start on the first full working day after the application has been entered into our system. Working days are Monday to Friday excluding any bank holidays and days between the 26th December and 1st January.



How to get the most from this service

Written only response:

Ensure that the following documents are submitted with your application as a minimum:

- Site location plan
- Detailed description of your development, include things like materials, landscaping, enhancements to the environment
- Drawings of your proposed development, site layout plan, plans and elevations

Once we have received the above information one of our planning officers will review your proposal and you will receive your report.

Householder:

We recommend that before you invest in any architects drawings you meet with your planning officer to discuss your development, this will allow you get initial feedback on the proposed works and can save you money on additional drawings or amendments (we are only able to review one set of plans per pre-application). Due to the volume of site visits we have to complete, officers are limited to a maximum of 15 minutes on site.

Once you have received your informal feedback from your site visit you will need to submit your proposal for review.

Ensure that the following documents are submitted with your application as a minimum:

- Site location plan
- Detailed description of your development, include things like materials, landscaping, enhancements to the environment
- Drawings of your proposed development, site layout plan, plans and elevations

Once we have received the above information one of our planning officers will review your proposal and you will receive your report.

We also know that after your permission has been granted or once the development has commenced there is often a need to make some changes. If this is the case please get in touch with us to take advantage of your post decision support included in your pre-application.



How to get the most from this service

Householder—Listed Building:

We recommend that before you invest in any architects drawings you meet with your planning officer to discuss your development, this will allow you get initial feedback on the proposed works and can save you money on additional drawings or amendments. Due to the volume of site visits we have to complete, officers are limited to a maximum of 1 hour on site.

Once you have received your informal feedback from your site visit you will need to submit your proposal for review.

Ensure that the following documents are submitted with your application as a minimum:

- Site location plan
- Heritage statement—this should tell us the enhancement this development will deliver to the listed building and that it will not detract from the property or its setting
- Detailed description of your development, include things like materials, landscaping, enhancements to the environment
- Drawings of your proposed development, site layout plan, plans and elevations

Once we have received the above information one of our planning officers will review your proposal and you will receive your report.

We also know that once your development has started there is often a need to make some changes, if this is the case please get in touch with us to take advantage of your post decision support included in your pre-application.

Further advice or meetings

If you feel that you require further time, in addition to the services included in the pre-application you have purchased, we will be happy to provide you a quote based on your requirements.



How to get the most from this service

New Single Dwelling:

We recommend that before you invest in any architects drawings you meet with your planning officer to discuss your development, this will allow you get initial feedback on the proposed works and can save you money on additional drawings or amendments.

Due to the volume of site visits we have to complete, officers are limited to a maximum of 15 minutes on site. If you would like to include your 30 minute meeting as part of this site visit please let us know.

Once you have received your informal feedback from your site visit you will need to submit your proposal for review.

Ensure that the following documents are submitted with your application as a minimum:

- Site location plan
- Detailed description of your development, include things like materials, landscaping, enhancements to the environment
- Drawings of your proposed development, site layout plan, plans and elevations

Once we have received the above information one of our planning officers will review your proposal and you will receive your report.

We also know that after your permission has been granted or once the development has commenced there is often a need to make some changes. If this is the case please get in touch with us to take advantage of your post decision support included in your pre-application.

Further advice or meetings

If you feel that you require further time, in addition to the services included in the pre-application you have purchased, we will be happy to provide you a quote based on your requirements.



How to get the most from this service

2 to 9 Dwellings:

We recommend that before you invest in any architects drawings you meet with your planning officer to discuss your development, this will allow you get initial feedback on the proposed works and can save you money on additional drawings or amendments.

Due to the volume of site visits we have to complete, officers are limited to a maximum of 15 minutes on site. If you would like to include your 1 hour meeting as part of this site visit please let us know.

Once you have received your informal feedback from your site visit you will need to submit your proposal for review.

Ensure that the following documents are submitted with your application as a minimum:

- Site location plan
- Detailed description of your development, include things like materials, landscaping, enhancements to the environment
- Drawings of your proposed development, site layout plan, plans and elevations

Once we have received the above information one of our planning officers will review your proposal and you will receive your report.

Remember to take advantage of our pre-submission validation checking service, this service will identify any items that will prevent your application being invalid when we receive it and can save time when you do submit it. Further details of this service can be found on your pre-application report.

We also know that after your permission has been granted or once the development has commenced there is often a need to make some changes. If this is the case please get in touch with us to take advantage of your post decision support included in your pre-application.

Further advice or meetings

If you feel that you require further time, in addition to the services included in the pre-application you have purchased, we will be happy to provide you a quote based on your requirements.



How to get the most from this service

10 to 24 Dwellings:

We recommend that before you invest in any architects drawings you meet with your planning officer to discuss your development, this will allow you get initial feedback on the proposed works and can save you money on additional drawings or amendments.

Due to the volume of site visits we have to complete, officers are limited to a maximum of 30 minutes on site. If you would like to include your 1 hour meeting as part of this site visit please let us know.

Once you have received your informal feedback from your site visit you will need to submit your proposal for review.

Ensure that the following documents are submitted with your application as a minimum:

- Site location plan
- Detailed description of your development, include things like materials, landscaping, enhancements to the environment
- Drawings of your proposed development, site layout plan, plans and elevations

Once we have received the above information one of our planning officers will review your proposal. As a major housing development it will also be featured at one of our major development peer review meetings this can highlight the importance of the development and increase stakeholder buy in for the scheme.

Remember to take advantage of our pre-submission validation checking service, this service will identify any items that will prevent your application being invalid when we receive it and can save time when you do submit it. Further details of this service can be found on your pre-application report.

We also know that after your permission has been granted or once the development has commenced there is often a need to make some changes. If this is the case please get in touch with us to take advantage of your post decision support included in your pre-application.

Further advice or meetings

If you feel that you require further time, in addition to the services included in the pre-application you have purchased, we will be happy to provide you a quote based on your requirements.



How to get the most from this service

25 to 50 Dwellings:

As a major development for 25 to 75 houses we recommend that all plans are available for our officer to review before we conduct a site visit.

Process for major pre-application:

- Submit plans
- Officer will review plans
- 1 hour site visit
- Planning officer review of initial plans
- 1 hour meeting to discuss review and recommendations
- Submit final plans
- Review of final plans and 1 hour meeting to discuss review
- Final officer report sent

Remember to take advantage of our pre-submission validation checking service, this service will identify any items that will prevent your application being invalid when we receive it and can save time when you do submit it. Further details of this service can be found on your pre-application report.

We also know that after your permission has been granted or once the development has commenced there is often a need to make some changes. If this is the case please get in touch with us to take advantage of your post decision support included in your pre-application.

Further advice or meetings

If you feel that you require further time, in addition to the services included in the pre-application you have purchased, we will be happy to provide you a quote based on your requirements.



How to get the most from this service

50+ Dwellings:

As a major development for 50 or more houses we will tailor the service based on the scale and needs of the proposal.

Please email planning@dacorum.gov.uk to arrange a call back to discuss your needs and arrange a quote for the work.



Service Levels

Written only response services

Within 20 working days we will provide a written response

Services with a 20 working day turn around

From when you submit your application we will aim to:

- Acknowledge receipt of your pre-application in 3 working days
- Contact you to arrange a site visit within 5 working days
- Complete a site visit within 13 working days
- Provide a summary of site visit finding within 3 working days of the site visit taking place
- Provide a full report within 12 working days of receiving your plans
- We will work with you to book meetings at the most appropriate time in the application

Services with 30 working day turn around (final plan review only)

From when you submit your application we will aim to:

- Acknowledge receipt of your pre-application in 3 working days
- Contact you to arrange a site visit within 5 working days
- Complete a site visit within 13 working days
- Provide a summary of site visit finding within 3 working days of the site visit taking place
- Provide a full report within 20 working days of receiving your plans
- We will work with you to book meetings at the most appropriate time in the application

Services with 30 working day turn around (initial and final plan review)

From when you submit your application we will aim to:

- Acknowledge receipt of your pre-application in 3 working days
- Contact you to arrange a site visit within 5 working days
- Complete a site visit within 13 working days
- Provide a summary of site visit and initial plans finding within 7 working days of the site visit taking place
- Provide a full report within 20 working days of receiving your final plans
- We will work with you to book meetings at the most appropriate time in the application



Further information

Are applications for pre-application advice confidential?

Please be aware that Dacorum Borough Council is subject to requirements under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Where the Council receives a request to disclose any information in relation to this discussion, it will notify and consult with you concerning its possible release. However, the Council reserves the right, to disclose any such information it deems appropriate and shall be responsible for determining at its absolute discretion whether the information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the FOIA or EIR.

What is the status of the advice received?

Although pre-application advice possibly forms a material consideration of a formal planning application, it does not constitute a formal or guaranteed outcome in the determination of a future planning application or other form of submission. Any views or opinions expressed are given in good faith, without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application, which will be subject to a period of public consultation and maybe decided at a Planning Committee. Please also note that the weight given to pre-application advice will decline over time.

Will the Council's advice incorporate the views from other departments / external organisations?

The advice provided will incorporate the views from other departments within Dacorum Borough Council, where relevant, such as Environmental Health, Trees & Woodlands, and Conservation. It must be noted, however, that there are other external statutory bodies which you may wish to consult with about your proposal, some of which may have their own pre-application charges.



Additional Resources

Hertfordshire County Council Highways:

The County Council welcomes and encourages discussions on the transport impacts of new development proposals before a developer submits a planning application.

Hertfordshire County Council Highways pre-application advice

Environment Agency:

The Environment Agency provides site-specific pre-application and post permission advice and would like to hear from you if your proposed development site: 11

- is in flood zones 2 or 3 (unless their Flood Risk Standing Advice applies)
- contains or is close to a 'main river'
- is on land affected by contamination
- handles waste or hazardous substances (including fuels & oils)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/developers-get-environmental-advice-on-yourplanning-proposals>

Herts Environmental Records Centre:

They manage information on habitats, species and sites across the county.

<http://www.hercinfo.org.uk/>



Additional Resources

Are there other sources of planning guidance?

Duty Planning Service

We offer a Duty Officer service. This service is by e-mail only and will only provide very limited advice, such as confirmation and direction to relevant national and local planning policies. This service does not include a site visit, a meeting, or any request requiring significant research to be undertaken by Planning Officers. Furthermore, any requests received through this service relating to a specific proposal on a particular site will be directed to the Council's pre-application advice service.

Planning Portal

The Planning Portal is the online planning resource for England and Wales. It contains links to Planning Practice Guidance, as well as 'Interactive Guides' for detached and terraced houses, which provides access to information on many common householder projects.

https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200125/do_you_need_permission