

Charging for Pre-application advice

Effective from 1st April 2009

Pre-application advisory service

There are considerable benefits to be obtained in seeking advice from the Planning Department before submitting a planning application.

We can help to give you an understanding of how Government, Regional, Local policies and emerging local policies together with other material considerations will be applied to your proposed development.

We can identify those proposals where you will require specialist reports to be submitted with your application.

We can indicate when a proposal is likely to be unacceptable in its current form, thereby saving you time and costs in submitting a formal application.

We can identify ways in which your proposal can be modified and amended to make it a more acceptable scheme for when it is formally submitted. This will reduce the handling time of the application and save on any resubmission costs.

In order to provide this bespoke service Mole Valley is changing the way it deals with its pre-application advisory service. The Council's Executive has decided that the cost of this discretionary service should be recovered directly from the applicant and not fall as a general cost to the Council Tax payer.

Householders (or their representatives) seeking advice to extend or alter their homes are exempt from the charge.

Details of charging for Pre-Application Planning advice

Requests for advice shall be carried out as follows -

- Requests can be made in writing, by e-mail, post or fax
- In line with current practice, the request shall include a site location plan clearly showing the site and its boundaries, drawings of the proposal (plans and elevations where appropriate), and a written description of the scheme with any relevant background information. Photographs of the site will be helpful
- The relevant fee must be paid within 14 days of our "estimate" which will be sent with our acknowledgement of your request. If payment is not received within the 14 day period, the enquiry will be closed

In return, the Council will undertake to deliver the following service –

- An initial acknowledgement letter stating the contact details of the case officer and providing an estimate of the fees to be paid.

- A substantive written reply will normally be sent within 14 working days if no consultees are involved in the process. If consultee responses are necessary, the process may take longer, or,
- A pre-application meeting will normally be arranged within 14 days of receipt of the above information.
- Advice will be given by an appropriate Officer based on the information supplied, law, policies and guidance in force at the time. The advice will not be binding on the eventual officer recommendation or any decision by the Local Planning Authority
- As is the case with current practice, the advice will guide the applicant through the policies and issues that are considered to be relevant to the scheme, set out concerns and clarify information that needs to be submitted with the application. The applicant will not be told that permission will be granted for a particular scheme. The onus remains on the applicant to demonstrate through a subsequent application, how the proposal meets planning policies, guidance and material considerations.
- All pre-application advice letters will contain the following caveat –

This advice represents an Officer's informal opinion based on the information you have supplied and is not intended to bind the Local Planning Authority's decision making powers on any formally submitted application. All submitted applications will be the subject of publicity and consultation in accordance with statutory and the Council's adopted procedures. These and other matters, which may subsequently come to light, may result in additional issues being raised that are pertinent to the determination of the site.

Scale of Charges –

Residential development (1 to 3 units)	£250
Residential development (4+ units)	£600
Commercial development (< 1000 sq metres)	£250
Commercial development (> 1000 sq metres)	£600
Changes of use	£250
Shopfronts	£50
Advertisements	£50
Other development not included above	£150

The above charges are per hour or part of an hour. Preparation time by Officers in respect of this service is included in the fee. For larger proposals where a series of meetings is likely, Officers will discuss the level of charge to be applied with the applicant/agent. The Corporate Head of Planning will have absolute discretion relating to charges for larger proposals and exemptions.

The charge is not applicable in the following instances –

- Householders (or their representatives) seeking advice to extend or alter their homes
- General planning advice at the Customer Contact Centre
- General planning advice on the telephone
- Works affecting Listed Buildings
- Proposals by Parish Councils
- Proposals by registered charities.