

Charging for:

Pre-Application Advice, Design Review Panel, Planning Performance Agreements and other services

Guidance Note - London Borough of Islington

April 2019



Introduction

The London Borough of Islington has a rich built heritage, a diverse community and high land values. It is one of the most densely populated parts of the UK and needs to accommodate growth while providing the best environment for existing and future residents, workers and visitors. Submitting a planning application for a development proposal is not always straight forward and our advice and guidance aims to help you through the process and to achieve the best development for the site.

Background

The council has powers under the Local Government Act 2003 to charge for the discretionary services of pre-application advice. This guidance note provides details on the procedure and the level of charges.

Our Service Commitment

As a Service we welcome and encourage discussions before a developer submits an application. Pre-application advice will generally give more certainty at an earlier stage and help resolve issues so that speedier planning decisions can be made. By charging we can allocate more resources to this all important early stage of the process, and be able to provide good advice from officers. We know from experience that developers and potential applicants generally welcome and benefit from such a service.

Why pre-application discussion?

The National Planning Policy Guidance actively encourages pre-application engagement. Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 20-001-20150326 (Revision date: 26 03 2015) states:

The value of pre-application engagement

How can pre-application engagement improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system?

Pre-application engagement by prospective applicants offers significant potential to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system and improve the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success. This can be achieved by:

- providing an understanding of the relevant planning policies and other material considerations associated with a proposed development
- working collaboratively and openly with interested parties at an early stage to identify, understand and seek to resolve issues associated with a proposed development
- discussing the possible mitigation of the impact of a proposed development, including any planning conditions
- identifying the information required to accompany a formal planning application, thus reducing the likelihood of delays at the validation stage.
- putting in place a Planning Performance Agreement where this would help with managing the process and agreeing any dedicated resources for progressing the application

The approach to pre-application engagement needs to be tailored to the nature of the proposed development and the issues to be addressed.

Particular characteristics within Islington:

As discussed above, Islington has some 41 conservation areas and over 4000 listed buildings. Additional to these considerations, it is one of the densest boroughs in the country which brings with it complexities for balancing the appropriate degree of development against protecting the living conditions of existing residents.

Additionally, the borough accommodates well informed residents who are active in the planning process. Careful assessment against policies and clear and robust justification is required to satisfy the expectations of the boroughs elected members and residents. This can sometimes be reflected in the length and complexity of reports, particularly if your proposal is one that by reason of level of public interest of the nature of proposals is required to be presented to a Planning Committee.

Early discussions with planning officers will provide the opportunity to steer projects in the right form that will be attractive to the community and acceptable to the local planning authority. They can be of great benefit to the applicant by identifying the key planning issues, avoiding abortive work and speeding up the process.

We seek to progress all applications within the prescribed period. However, major cases will take longer than the prescribed 13 week period and we actively encourage the use of Planning Performance Agreements in these instances. Work at the pre-application stage will help to minimise unnecessary delays.

Utilising this service should lead to a reduction in the number of planning applications that are invalid when we receive them. It should lead to a reduction in the number of planning applications that are refused or withdrawn because the development is unacceptable. If comprehensive pre-application discussions have taken place on larger schemes it should avoid the need for significant revisions to a scheme during the lifetime of the application. This should remove a major factor that often results in significant delays.

What kind of applications will benefit from the Service?

Where enquiries are made as to whether planning permission is needed then verbal advice will be given, however where written confirmation is needed, including straightforward cases, then a formal application for a certificate of lawfulness is required.

Advice to local residents affected by proposals, is offered by the case officer and is not charged for. For all other advice the following charges will apply:

Charges of Pre-Application advice, Planning Performance Agreements, Design Review Panel and other services

Development Proposals		Fee
1	Householder Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge for written advice: £286.00 + VAT = £343.20 Charge for written advice with site visit: £465.00 + VAT = £558 Charge for follow-up advice: £185.00 + VAT = £222.00
2	Listed Buildings (householder development for Statutory Listed Buildings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge for written advice: £425.00 + VAT = £510.00 Charge for written advice with site visit: £611.00 + VAT = £733.20 Charge for follow-up advice: £212.00 + VAT = £254.40
3	Small Scale Minors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of 1 – 3 residential units or floor space up to 499sq.m Shopfronts. Advertisements. Air conditioning / plant / equipment. Amendments to previously approved schemes. Approval of details / discharge of conditions. Advice relating to listed building / conservation / heritage advice for a property which is not a single dwelling house or residential flat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge for written advice: £810.00 + VAT = £972.00 Charge for written advice with site visit: £1,184.00 + VAT = £1,420.80 Charge for follow-up advice: £680.00 + VAT = £816.00
4a	Large Scale Minors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of 4 – 6 residential units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge for site visit/meeting and written advice: £1,888.00 + VAT = £2,265.60

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of 500 – 699 sq.m floorspace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge for follow-up meeting and written advice: £1,173.00 + VAT = £1,407.60
4b	<p>Large Scale Minors</p> <p>Creation of 7–9 residential units; or</p> <p>Creation of 700 – 999sq.m floorspace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge for site visit/meeting and written advice: £2,264.00 + VAT = £2,716.80 Charge for follow-up meeting and written advice: £1,410.00 + VAT = £1692.00
5a	<p>Major Schemes</p> <p>10 to 20 residential units or</p> <p>1,000 to 1,999sq.m of commercial floor space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge for site visit/meeting and written advice: £8,171.00 + VAT = £9,805.20 Charge for follow up meeting and written advice: £2,431.00 + VAT = £2,917.20
5b	<p>Major Schemes</p> <p>21 residential units or more; or</p> <p>2,000sq.m of more of commercial floor space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge for site visit/meeting and written advice: £10,720.00 + VAT = £12,864.00 Charge for follow up meeting and written advice: £5,360.00 + VAT = £6,432.00
6a	<p>Planning Performance Agreement</p> <p>For a scheme involving a 5a Major Development scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £8,130.00 + VAT = £9,756.00
6b	<p>Planning Performance Agreement</p> <p>For a scheme involving a 5b Major Development scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £9,240.00 + VAT = £11,088.00
6c	<p>Major - Planning Performance Agreement Package:</p> <p>Includes: initial meeting, follow up meeting, one Design Review Panel and agreement to take forward bespoke determination period into application stage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £29,670.00 + VAT = 35,604.00

6d	PPA Bespoke: To be agreed for any application proposing >150 residential units and/or >20,000sqm commercial floorspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be negotiated
6e	Conditions: Planning Performance Agreement Initial set up fee and then a charge of £510 per condition forming part of the agreement (to reflect likely hourly input). Meetings to be charged for in addition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £2,465 +VAT = 2,958.00 (set up fee) £510.00 + VAT = £612.00 per condition
6f	Planning Performance Agreement (s73) For Major 5a Development Type. Additional charges for meetings and unforeseen / extra costs to the LPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £2,465.00 + VAT = £2,958.00
6g	Planning Performance Agreement (s73) For Major 5b development type. Additional charges for meetings and unforeseen / extra costs to the LPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £5,135.00 + VAT = £6,162.00
6h	Planning Performance Agreement (s73) Relating to a development of >150 residential units or >20,000sqm of commercial floorspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be negotiated.
7	Extension of Time - Small scale Extension of Time – minor 4a Extension of Time – minor 4b Extension of Time – Majors 5a Extension of Time Majors 5b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £510 + VAT = £612.00 £1,230 + VAT= £1,476.00 £1,643 + VAT = £ 1,971.60 £8,171.00 + VAT = £9,805.20 £10,720.00 + VAT = £12,864.00
8	Design Review Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £4,340.00 + VAT = £5,208.00 £3,330.00 + VAT =£3,996.00 (second/third meeting)
9	Streetbook Surgeries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £1,625.00 + VAT = £1,950.00

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10	Officer research/correspondence per hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £141.00 + VAT = £169.20
11	Express Enforcement Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £645.00 + VAT = £774.00

What will you get from this service?

We will:

For Householder, Listed Building Consent (residential dwelling) and Small Scale Minor Developments

- Within 5 working days of receiving your request contact you to take payment for the pre-application service.
- Within 20 working days of receiving payment undertake a desk top survey and provide you with written advice on your proposal, and advise what documents and information would need to be submitted with any future planning application.
- Please note requests for a site visit will incur an additional cost as stated above and may result in longer time scales for a response.

For Large Scale Minor Developments and Major Schemes we will

- Within 10 working days of receiving a request provide confirmation as to what the fee will be and provide details of what information we require. It is entirely up to the applicant how information is submitted. It should be noted the more comprehensive this information the more comprehensive the advice will be.
- Equally, the more comprehensive the submission there may be a need to agree an alternative response timeframe, particularly if responses from internal consultees are required to inform a reply.
- Within 10 working days of receiving the fee we will contact you to arrange a date for site visit and or meeting, advise which council officers will be in attendance.
- Provide written confirmation within 21 working days of the site visit / meeting of the advice and views given by us. Advise whether further meetings are considered necessary.
- Advise on whether a s106 would be required and having regard to the relevant planning policies indication of what the general heads of terms could be.
- Provide a pre-submission validation checklist of documents, information required and likely consultations to be undertaken.

Design Review Panel

It should be noted that the above service does not include the pre-application being reviewed by the Islington's Design Review Panel. There is a separate fee to cover this aspect of the service (although the package PPA fee does include presentation to one DRP session).

The Islington Design Review Panel provides professional design advice on pre-application proposals for key developments in the borough. The Panel consists of highly qualified professionals within the built environment, to include architects, landscape architects, public realm specialists and urban designers. The Panel members have been appointed by Islington Council through a competitive application process, and the Panel exists to advise Islington Council, however it offers independent design advice. It does not have decision-making powers, but serves as an advisory body helping the council to achieve high quality urban and architectural design for its residents.

Officers and Members of the Planning Committee expect that all major development proposals are reviewed by the Design Review Panel at pre-application stage, due to the priorities within all levels of policy to improve design quality.

Information Required

The council will require a basic level of information to ensure that proper advice can be given. The following is not exhaustive but is a useful guide to what you will need to provide so that you receive the advice and guidance you need. The more information you provide the more comprehensive our advice can be.

For Householder pre-applications we suggest the minimum information you submit should be:

- A plan identifying your property;
- Sketches of your proposals with dimensions indicated; and
- photographs of the property in particular covering the aspect of the property which you wish to change / extend and details of any windows to neighbouring properties that may be affected by the proposal.
- Ideally you should be providing details of ground levels on your property and on those of immediately adjoining properties for relevant applications.

For Listed Building pre-application (advice for Householder developments that are within Statutory Listed Buildings) we suggest the minimum information you submit should be:

- A plan identifying your property;
- A description of the proposed works and how these may affect the historic fabric and design of the building;
- Initial plans/ sketches of your proposals with dimensions indicated; and
- Photographs of the property in particular covering the aspects of the property which you wish to change.

For Large Scale Minor development proposals and Major Scheme proposals we advise the following information is submitted:

Ownership – clarification of applicant’s status, particularly if a legal agreement is required including details of other relevant interests such as tenancies, mortgages etc.

The existing site or building – full site address and location plan at 1:1250, with site outlined in red, any adjoining land outlined in blue.

Site History – existing lawful use of site and planning history, e.g. applications, appeals, enforcements

Your proposal – full description of the range of proposed development, scale, uses, schedule of floor space, housing details including tenure, mix, size, including drawings, sketches.

Urban Design Analysis - Depending on how advanced the scheme is an urban design analysis/principles of the site and area and definition of the key characteristics of the scheme would be required.

Planning obligations – list of identified planning obligations commitments/suggestions, including a commitment to s106 legal agreement and to paying the Council’s legal costs involved in negotiating, preparing and completing the agreement.

Photographs of site/surroundings – of site and surrounding - fully annotated.

Please note - All documentation should be received 14 working days before the pre-application meeting otherwise the pre-application meeting may be rescheduled.

At the meeting (for Large Scale Minor and Major Schemes)

What will be covered at the pre-application meeting?

Islington’s planners have a unique knowledge of how local and national planning policies could apply to your proposal. At the pre-application meeting we will look at the following issues

- Land use policies – local and strategic
- Residential/Housing quality – density, size of units, mix, tenure, amenity space
- Impact of neighbouring amenity – daylight/sunlight, privacy, noise
- Historical impact – listed buildings/conservation areas
- Natural environment – open space, ecological diversity
- Design and sustainability
- Servicing/access/parking/highways works/traffic orders/transport
- Planning obligations
- Any other issues identified as relevant

The more information that you provide, the more comprehensive and clear the advice will be.

After the meeting?

Following this meeting we will write to you within 21 working days confirming

the advice given at the meeting. If new information arises during the meeting or further research is required an extended timescale may be agreed. The letter will also outline the requirements for you to submit a valid application and number of sets of documentation required for identified consultations.

If alterations to the scheme are required or it is felt that the scheme needs to develop before a submission is made a further round of correspondence and meetings may need to take place. A further charge will apply.

On the larger more complex cases a series of meetings may need to occur before an application is submitted. These meetings will consider in more detail issues including inter alia, the design and drawings, transport assessments, travel plans, design and access statements, environmental assessments.

Role of Councillors

In respect of the more significant major schemes the views of elected Members of the Council will be sought.

Islington has set up an internal member/officer meeting called Members' Pre-application Forum which meets monthly. This is not a public meeting but where appropriate developers are invited to present their scheme at the pre-application stage. The Members' Forum receives reports on major and strategic developments within the Borough and provides a forum for Member discussion. No meeting minutes are taken of these meetings, but verbal feedback can often be given.

The advantage of obtaining pre-application advice as part of a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) and what information is required

In some circumstances, particularly for major developments it is strongly recommended that applicants sign up to a PPA with the Council from the outset. This enables applicants to receive a responsive bespoke service which considers the development proposal from the pre-application stage right through to the determination and issuing of the planning decision and where appropriate at the implementation phase with the discharge of planning conditions and planning obligations.

It is recommended that an early liaison is undertaken with Development Management to assess the nature of the scheme and whether this would be an appropriate format for your pre-application. The Council will require a basic level of information to start things moving, this is the same as what we would require for regular pre-application advice and is detailed above in this guidance note.

On receipt of this information we will set out a project management framework for handling the proposed development which will form the basis of the PPA. The PPA commits both parties to an agreed timetable, which contains "milestones" that make clear what level of resources are required. This includes the likely number of meetings necessary and the officers required to take forward the relevant issues and ensure that all key planning issues are properly considered. It will also ensure that priority is given for review of the proposal by the Council's Design Review Panel. Members' Pre-application Forum and Planning Committee and any other necessary Council bodies.

Disclaimer

Any advice given by council officers at pre-application stage is not a formal planning decision by the council as local planning authority. We will give you the best advice possible based on the information provided. This advice will be offered in good faith and to the best of ability, without prejudice to any formal consideration of any planning application following statutory consultation, the issues raised and the evaluation of all available information.

We cannot guarantee that any application subsequently received will be made valid or approved. However, pre-application advice should assist in helping applicants ensure that all necessary information, including the correct fee is provided. This will reduce the risk of any subsequent application being declared not valid and it should assist applicants in increasing awareness of the relevant planning issues which will inform any subsequent decision as to whether or not an application will be approved.

What to do next

To request a pre-application meeting please submit a Pre-application Advice Request Form and submit this with your supporting documents to:

planning@Islington.gov.uk

Please ensure you state “Pre-application Advice Request” in the email title or alternatively your submission and request form can be sent to:

Planning Pre-application Advice
Development Management Service
Planning and Development
Islington Council
Town Hall
Upper Street
N1 2UD

Please note: If a meeting is cancelled by the developer/applicant then any costs incurred by the Council in preparing for the meeting will be charged. A **minimum** charge of 20% will apply in all cases.